CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

DOCTRINES OF A FUTURE STATE,

AND

THE RESURRECTION, &c.

BRITISH MUSEUM

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

DOCTRINES OF A FUTURE STATE,

AND

THE RESURRECTION,

AS REVEALED, OR SUPPOSED TO BE SO,

IN THE SCRIPTURES:

ON THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE ITSELF:

ON SOME PECULIARITIES IN ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES:

ON THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL AND ST. JOHN, &c.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SOME STRICTURES ON THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH.

BY RICHARD AMNER.

And when they heard of the Resurrection of the Dead, some mocked: and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter. Acts xvii. 22.

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PREFACE.

IT is not eaſy to conceive of any denomination of perſons to whom the ſuppoſed Scripture Doctrines of a Future State and the Reſurrection ſhould not ſeem of ſome importance. By ſome it has been reckoned probable, that the conſolation which theſe afforded, to the inquiring and anxious mind, againſt the fear of Death, was no ſmall inducement to many, in the firſt ages of the church, to becoming Chriſtian; and in our own times it is obſervable, that they who have given up almoſt every thing elſe of Chriſtianity, as Chriſtian religion has been more uſually underſtood, do ſtill however profeſs to be attached to theſe doctrines of it: And I ſuppoſe I may be allowed to ſay, that the evidences of its truth have not been yet ſhewn to be ſo very inconſiderable, as to juſtify, in almoſt any perſons, a wilful neglect and contempt of theſe its confeſſedly prime and diſcriminating articles. I have therefore reſolved, partly as an individual deeply intereſted, as well as for ſome other reaſons, to make myſelf acquainted, as far as I ſhould be able, with theſe ſubjects, and laying the Scriptures before me, to diſcover, if I could, how far any

ſuch

ſuch Doctrines as theſe are revealed in them, and the degree, and circumſtances of greater or leſs imperfection, in which they are ſo. And I ſpeak the ſtricteſt truth when I ſay, it is only as ſo led on, that I have proceeded to the conſideration of ſome other, and, as may ſeem to ſome at firſt, very different ſubjects. As theſe papers now are, they may be ſaid to contain the ſentiments of the writer, ſuch as they are, and the beſt he has been able to attain to, upon the moſt material things reſpecting Religion and Chriſtianity; and may be of uſe, it is hoped, to ſuch as may be willing to enter upon the ſame ſubjects of inquiry, and proſecute them with the ſame ſincerity and candour, whether the concluſion ſhall be the ſame, or different; for of that I would not be ſanguine.—That God may lead us all into the knowledge of ſo much truth as concerns us, I both pray and hope; and that every well-intentioned inquiry after it muſt have ſome tendency to good, I would willingly believe.

RICHARD AMNER.

HINCKLEY, *October 30th*,
1797.

21 0059

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The argument of Jesus with the Sadducees, in Matthew, Chap. xxii.—Did Jesus teach a Future State generally, or only as he taught a Resurrection?—The latter supposed to be sufficiently evident.—An attempt to ascertain more particularly our Saviour's idea of the Resurrection. Page 1.

CHAPTER II.

Whether the Patriarchs and Jews had any knowledge of the Resurrection?—A large enumeration of passages considered in this view. Page 5.

CHAPTER III.

Of divers Passages in the other Evangelists; in St. John's Gospel more particularly.—That the Jews in those days were not without the notion of a Resurrection;—The grounds of this enquired after. Page 57.

CHAPTER IV.

A Passage in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians considered.—Whether the Apostles and first Christians expected the Coming of Christ before the End of the Age in which they lived?—Answered in the Affirmative.—The seeming Rise of this Expectation;—and various other Strictures. Page 77.

CHAPTER V.

The fifteenth Chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians considered:—Of the Resurrection of the Body more particularly. Page 94.

CHAPTER

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VI.

Some other Paſſages conſidered;—Thoſe in the ſecond Epiſtle to the Corinthians, chap. v. *more particularly.* Page 101.

CHAPTER VII.

On the Inſpiration of the New Teſtament. Page 117.

CHAPTER VIII.

Other Obſervations upon Inſpiration.—The Deſign and Doctrines of Chriſtianity. Page 133.

CHAPTER IX.

Some further Obſervations on the Epiſtles of St. Paul.—His Doctrine of Juſtification more eſpecially. Page 169.

CHAPTER X.

On the Prophecies of Daniel. Page 182.

CHAPTER XI.

On the Revelation. Page 232.

CHAPTER XII.

A Brief Review, and ſome additional Remarks;—On Iſaiah's Prophecies more eſpecially. Page 256.

APPENDIX. Page 305.

21 0059

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF

THE RESURRECTION, &c.

CHAPTER I.

The argument of Jeſus with the Sadducees, in Matthew, Chap. xxii.---Did Jeſus teach a Future State generally, or only as he taught a Reſurrection?---The latter ſuppoſed to be ſufficiently evident.---An attempt to aſcertain more particularly our Saviour's idea of the Reſurrection.

THIS argument of Jeſus with the Sadducees coming before us ſomewhat early in the reading of the New Teſtament, and particularly adapted perhaps to give us ſome aſſiſtance in explaining the terms, *Reſurrection of the Dead*, I begin with it, chiefly in this view; hoping to receive further inſtruction upon the ſubject from ſuch other paſſages as may afterwards come before me.

Matthew xxii. 23, &c. *The ſame day came to him the Sadducees, which ſay, that there is no reſurrection; and aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, Moſes ſaid, If a man die, having no children, his brother*

ſhall marry his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother.

Now there were with us ſeven brethren, and the firſt when he had married a wife, deceaſed, and having no iſſue, left his wife unto his brother. Likewiſe the ſecond alſo, and the third, unto the ſeventh. And laſt of all the woman died alſo. Therefore in the Reſurrection, which thou affirmed, and we deny, *whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of the ſeven? for they all had her.*

Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God: For in the Reſurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are like the angels of God in heaven.

But as touching the Reſurrection of the Dead in general, and without reſpect to this or any other ſuch peculiar caſe as may only ſeem and be perhaps intended to perplex the ſubject; *have ye not read that which was ſpoken to you by God, ſaying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? Now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living:* and cannot therefore be ſuppoſed to have called himſelf, the God of theſe perſons after their deceaſe, which was however the caſe with them when he avowed ſuch a relationſhip to them in Exod. iii. 6. unleſs they had been ſtill in ſome ſenſe or other living perſons.

Such ſeems to be the general nature of our Saviour's argument, and certainly ſo far a good one, whether we will ſuppoſe theſe deceaſed perſons to have been alive and with God, or will only ſuppoſe,

his

his power, grace, and eternity conſidered, that they would hereafter be ſo; neither again, the ſmall proportion which any length of time bears to eternity conſidered, would it ſeem to be of any material importance to the perſons themſelves, to which of the two notions we may chooſe to incline. In ſome other views however it may not perhaps be of altogether no importance; in their view more eſpecially who may wiſh to underſtand the Scriptures at large, and would be glad to find in them, if ſuch there be, a conſiſtent doctrine. I would aſk them, whether in this reſpect the things following are not obſervable? Firſt, the very term made uſe of, and ſeemingly by common conſent both of Jeſus and the Sadducees, *Anaſtaſis*, or *up-ſtanding?* which ſeems but ill to agree with the notion of thoſe who chooſe to ſuppoſe in death a mere flight, ſeparation, or departure of the ſoul or thinking principle from the body only; at the ſame time that it does very well expreſs, and even beautifully repreſent, that riſing again or ſtanding up of the dead from their graves in the laſt day, which ſome have thought to be the more ſcriptural opinion?---Secondly, may not this very argument of Jeſus, if conſidered in its known nature and extent, be aſſiſting to us upon this occaſion? The Sadducees, we are told, were diſbelievers in a future ſtate at large, and this is ſuppoſed to be the reaſon why the argument of Jeſus does only prove it in this indeterminate and uncertain manner. But may we not here aſk, whether every one teaching a future ſtate does not repreſent it under ſome particular mode and form

or other? and, that if Jeſus did in no other way and manner teach a future ſtate than under this notion or form of a Reſurrection, whether we have not a clue ſuggeſted to us for the reſolution of this queſtion * ?---Thirdly, are not the additional words of Jeſus, as given us by St. Luke, in the parallel place in his goſpel, in chap. xx. 38. very confirming to this notion? *for all live unto him*, or in his view and eſtimation; as the meaning may be thought to be, and as a paſſage in St. Paul, in Rom. iv. 17, which is neither unlike this, nor very foreign to the argument, very much ſtrengthens?

I ſhall therefore ſuppoſe for the preſent, that of the two different modes of explication of our Saviour's argument ſuggeſted above, there is ſomething to be mentioned in favour of the latter above the former; ſtill however ſubject to ſuch further light upon the ſubject as may poſſibly hereafter diſcloſe itſelf, and by which perhaps the preſent glimmering may be extinguiſhed.

* Of thoſe who argue for the doctrine of a future ſtate upon the more rational and philoſophical grounds, as they think them, of the ſoul's immateriality and natural immortality, it may be obſerved, that as their ſyſtem very little needs ſo they very little mind a reſurrection.

CHAPTER II.

Whether the Patriarchs and Jews had any knowledge of the Reſurrection?---A large enumeration of paſſages conſidered in this view.

IN the argument of Jeſus it is ſaid, *Ye do err*, meaning in their denial of the Reſurrection, *not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God;* as if their error had proceeded in part from ſome miſtake upon this latter ſubject, and not from ignorance of the Scriptures only. It is not however now very eaſy to conceive how this ſhould have been the caſe, as upon this ſubject, the power of God, it does not appear that the Sadducees held any other opinion than the other Jews; neither is there the ſmalleſt reaſon for imagining that this was the caſe. They might however poſſibly object, that ſuch a Reſurrection as Jeſus taught was not a proper object of power, or by ſome other metaphyſical and philoſophical arguments oppoſe themſelves to the notion; and with this brief remark I hope I may be allowed to diſmiſs for the preſent this part of the ſubject. But upon this other ſuppoſed cauſe of their error, the not knowing the Scriptures, I feel a diſpoſition to be particular. It will bring before me a conſiderable number of paſſages in the Old Teſtament which have been often thought of in this view, and concerning which it is very deſirable that ſome deciſive judgment ſhould be formed, if perchance ſuch deciſion ſhall be attainable.

I ſhall begin with that which the generality of inquirers into this ſubject do probably firſt think of, the paſſage in Geneſis, chap. iv. which gives an account of the death of Abel, "whom Cain ſlew, becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous *." In which hiſtory it may be obſerved, that the Supreme Being, far from looking on with indifference, is repreſented as proceeding to immediate judgment on the caſe; and that thereupon Cain is ſentenced and puniſhed, though not Abel in the ſame viſible manner rewarded, as he could not now regularly be, as we are accuſtomed to think, in this world. From whence ſome, I ſuppoſe, in almoſt every age have been willing to believe and hope that he would ſurely in ſome other, rather than admit the only other alternative in this caſe, that virtue ſo ſincere and perſevering ſhould be for ever unrewarded.—But not ſo, it ſeems, theſe Sadducees, by whatever means they evaded, as they doubtleſs endeavoured to do in ſome way or other, the plauſibility of this argument.

Their evaſion of this other, uſually drawn from the caſe of Enoch, in Gen. v. 24. is perhaps more eaſily conceivable. They would probably ſay, that where there had been no death, there could be no Reſurrection, and that from a caſe ſo extraordinary in its circumſtances no general concluſion whatſoever could be drawn. It would ſtill however be true, according to this account, that God had ſhewn himſelf to be decidedly on the ſide of piety, at leaſt in one inſtance, and had rewarded the more than

* 1 John iii. 12.

or-

ordinary practice of it by a reward equally extraordinary. And how then, in the minds of thoſe who admitted the fact, and were in ſome degree emulous of the ſame character, could ſome degree of deliberation, and of hope in favour of themſelves, fail to be the conſequence?

In the hiſtory of Abraham alſo, who is held up to view in the ſame book as another great example of faith in God and piety, ſuch language is made uſe of as one cannot but think muſt have been of conſiderable force, not only to eſtabliſh his own hope and comfort in this reſpect, but alſo thoſe of other like-minded perſons. As when it was ſaid to him by the Supreme Being, upon the occaſion mentioned in chap. xv. 1. and with the view of preparing him, as it ſhould ſeem, for ſome approaching trials, *Fear not, Abram, I am thy ſhield, and thy exceeding great reward;* and again in chap. xvii. 1. when he was ninety years old and nine, *I am the Almighty*; or, as in the margin, the all-ſufficient *God; walk before me and be thou perfect:* which ſeems to imply a purpoſe in the Almighty to reward him if he ſhould be ſo, and to be mentioned to him in the way of motive and encouragement.---But every thing of this ſort the Sadducees would probably ſay was done to the full by that covenant which God made him in favour of his poſterity, and the bleſſings which he did in fact, and in reward of Abraham's piety, beſtow upon them. At leaſt I know not how, with theſe paſſages before them, and in conſiſtency with their denial of a future ſtate, they could have

argued more plauſibly: and ſo perhaps we may moſt reaſonably ſuppoſe them to have explained away this other, which Jeſus does here ply them with from the book of Exodus; unleſs we will rather ſay, that as an argument in favour of a future ſtate it was moſt probably new to them, and that they were rather taken by ſurpriſe in this inſtance *.

And

* So I incline to think might be poſſibly the caſe for two reaſons; firſt, from St. Matthew's ſaying, in verſe thirty-fourth, that they were *ſilenced*; which does not neceſſarily imply conviction, and is often the conſequence of being taken by ſurpriſe only; and ſecondly, becauſe that amongſt divines I find many who ſeem to be of opinion that in our Saviour's argument there is not much of what is direct and forcible. "It is an inference," ſays Epiſcopius, "rather than a proof direct; and ſuch an inference alſo as does rather ground itſelf upon the knowledge which Jeſus had of the ſecret meaning and intention of God, when he ſpake the words, than upon any thing in the words themſelves, ſuggeſting of neceſſity this meaning."—*Quæ tamen illa collectio magis nititur cognitione intentionis divinæ ſub generalibus iſtis verbis occultatæ aut comprehenſæ, de qua Chriſto certo conſtabat, quam neceſſaria conſequentia ſive verborum vi ac virtute manifeſta.* In the Divine Legation, vol. v. p. 191.

And to much the ſame purpoſe ſay the authors of a certain catechiſm. *Habiturine ſunt vitam æternam ii qui eam ſperarunt, licet iis promiſſa non fuerit?*—"Could the Patriarchs and Jews reaſonably hope for a future life, when it had not been promiſed them?—Yea; if by impiety and diſobedience they did not render themſelves unworthy of it; for what need hinder the Almighty from being better than his promiſe? As Jeſus *acutely* as well as truely argues from the caſe of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, in Luke xx. 27, 28."—*Prorſus; ſi modo ex animo Deum coluerunt, et dicto audientes ei fuere. Nec enim obſtat quicquam, quo minus plus præſtet, quam promiſerit Deus. Et Chriſtus d aperte docet, Luc. xx. 27, 28. cum è verbis ipſius Dei et vere et acute*

And beſides theſe I recollect not any other paſſages in the five books of Moſes which need be now mentioned, or which may not be conſidered with more propriety hereafter *. I ſhall therefore proceed to the other books of the Old Teſtament, beginning with Job, which may ſeem in ſeveral reſpects to deſerve the preference.

Job xix. 21ſt verſe and following. *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye perſecute me as God,* ſeem to join with him againſt me, (of which more hereafter) *and are not ſatisfied with my fleſh*; with what I have already ſuffered in it? See verſe 20th in illuſtration. *Oh that my words were now written, Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God: Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf;* literally, to or for me; *and mine eye ſhall behold, and not another* only; *though my reins be conſumed,* or ſhould be conſumed *in me. But ye ſhould ſay,* referring to verſe 22d. *why perſecute we him? ſeeing the root of the matter is found in*

acute colligit, Abrahamum, Iſaacum, et Jacobum reſurrecturos à mortuis et victuros. Catecheſis Eccleſiarum Polonicarum, p. 246. —So far, it ſeems, according to theſe authors (to whom more might be added;) are the words in Exodus from being any proof, unleſs as Jeſus choſe to explain them, of the point in queſtion.

* In the concluſion of this chapter.

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me. And therefore, *Be ye afraid of the ſword, for wrath,* the divine diſpleaſure or wrath, *bringeth the puniſhment of the ſword, that ye may know there is a judgement*; a judgement for you in caſe of improper temper and conduct, and not for me only.

It is here very obvious to remark, that if our tranſlation of the paſſage, *I know that my Redeemer,* &c. be right, the queſtion propoſed to be conſidered is determined, and the importance alſo of the Chriſtian doctrine, conſidered as the revelation of a future life, in ſome meaſure leſſened; it not being eaſy to conceive how any words could more fully expreſs than theſe do the ideas of the New Teſtament upon the ſubject. And it is accordingly ſomewhat curious to obſerve in the Burial Service of the Church how this paſſage and another in the New Teſtament, John xi. 25, 26. ſuppoſed to be of the moſt explicit kind, are placed together, and ſeem to be in the moſt perfect correſpondency and unity together. It is all however owing, I will be bold to ſay, to the miſapprehenſion of the tranſlators, or of the age in which they lived, reſpecting the ſenſe, and to ſuch a choice of the terms in conſequence, as is eaſily accounted for under theſe circumſtances. So, for inſtance, in verſe 26th, we have the word *worms* inſerted, which leads the merely Engliſh and modern reader almoſt unavoidably to think upon what is ſuppoſed to paſs upon the body in the grave; when the thoughts of Job might be poſſibly fixed, and were in all probability only fixed, upon ſuch depredations made upon his body then alive,

by

by the boils and other ulcers referred to in chap. ii. 4, 5, 6, 7; chap vii. 5, &c. and in this chapter, verſe 20; as had already reduced him to a very diſeaſed ſtate, and might, for ought that he knew to the contrary, be permitted to attack and conſume his very vitals. Notwithſtanding which however, and even putting ſo extreme a caſe, (and which he has in part put before, in chap. xiii. 15, 16. ſuppoſing the verſion to be right) he is ſtill perſuaded, that God will ſooner or later, and ſo as that he himſelf ſhall live to ſee it, and not another only tell it of him, appear for him and ſtand up as it were on his ſide, and would even reſtore him by miracle, rather than ſuffer him to periſh irretrievably under the circumſtances of his preſent defamed and afflicted ſituation. And in the ſame view alſo may theſe other words, *Redeemer* and *latter day*, ſo appropriate in their meaning according to modern ideas (though between latter day and laſt day there is ſome difference) be mentioned; when inſtead of the former, *advocate* or *vindicator* would have done as well, and inſtead of the latter, *afterward* or *hereafter* would have been more exact and better; the word *day* in this paſſage, like *worms* in the other, having nothing correſponding to it in the Hebrew text, as the tranſlators have been careful to ſuggeſt. And why then not acquieſce in ſuch an interpretation of this famous paſſage as that above given, which is ſo juſt and obvious, highly poetical, and perfectly ſuitable to the deſign of the poem and circumſtances of the ſpeaker, as may more fully appear hereafter, than bring forward another

which

which has no juſt foundation in the text, and is ſo eaſily reſolvable into modern opinions and prejudices only?

Next to the above the whole train of thought in the fourteenth chapter deſerves attention. It is indeed of a very different kind from the foregoing; as full of deſpondency, I mean, as that is of confidence; which is not however any juſt objection to either; for even good and wiſe men are not in the happieſt frames at all times, but have been known at different times to expreſs themſelves, as it is certain that Job in this poem has often done, very differently. I ſhall therefore only attempt to repreſent the ſtate of his mind as it ſeems to have now been, and hope that the following will be found in this view no very bad analyſis. In the two firſt verſes he complains of the brevity and miſery of the life of men in general, though with an evident reference all the while to the peculiarity of his own ſituation. He proceeds from thence to the ſixth verſe, to expoſtulate with his Maker, and as we moderns are apt to think, with ſufficient freedom, upon theſe ſubjects; and then goes on, in the following verſes to the tenth, to aſſign ſomething like a reaſon, as ſeemed to him at leaſt, why human life being ſo ſhort might have been permitted to be more comfortable. Becauſe "there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will ſprout again;" literally, will renew or renovate; "and that the tender branch thereof, will not ceaſe, however the root thereof, wax old in the earth, and the ſtock thereof may ſeem to die in the ground;"---*But*

man

man dieth, and waſteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghoſt, and where is he? It is not with him as with the tree or plant; when was he ever known to renew in like manner or live again? According to Job, it is not by ſuch an image, but by others of a different and much leſs chearful ſort than the ſtate of man in this inſtance is to be repreſented; *As the waters fail from the ſea;* that is, when ſeparated from it, and no longer ſupplied by it; *and the flood,* or flowing river, ſwelling as it may ſeem, *decayeth and drieth up,* under the like as not very diſſimilar circumſtances; *ſo man lieth down and riſeth not, till the heavens be no more;* that is, never, not while the world and nature laſt; for our author is ſpeaking, the reader will obſerve, and only thinking, of a re-living in this world, after the manner of the tree or plant, and could not therefore have more forcibly denied it than by this language *:--- *they ſhall not awake,* never again ſo awake, *nor be raiſed out of their ſleep.* And now, to obſerve the ſingular turn which his thoughts take in verſe thirteenth, and his willingneſs to deceive himſelf, if poſſible, into ſomething like comfort, is rather curious. *Oh that thou wouldeſt hide me in the grave, that thou wouldeſt keep me ſecret, until thy wrath be paſt, that thou wouldeſt appoint me a ſet time, and remember me,* wouldeſt be then pleaſed to do ſo. *If when a man dies, he ſhall live,* or might

* So in St. Matthew, chap. v. 18. *till heaven and earth paſs, not one jot,* &c.—See alſo in St. Paul, a ſomewhat ſimilar expreſſion, 1 Cor. viii. 13.

hope

hope to live *again*; in ſuch a caſe *all the days of my appointed time* in the grave, as the meaning moſt probably is, *will I wait*, would willingly and even thankfully do ſo as it were, *till my change*, or renovation, like that of the tree or plant in verſe ſeventh; for it is the ſame word in both places, *come*: and this it is hoped the reader will obſerve, as it ſeems to be full in proof that the *waiting* in this verſe, if we will chooſe to underſtand it in part of waiting or endurance in this life (as ſome, adverting to chap. vii. 1. incline to do) is ſtill however to be underſtood principally of ſuch an imaginary and poetical waiting in the grave as has been mentioned, and in the proſpect of ſuch change or renovation from death to life again, as is analogous to that of the tree or plant before referred to.---In ſuch a caſe alſo, verſe fifteenth (ſtill retaining the ſame ſoothing images) *Thou ſhalt call, and I will anſwer thee*, thou ſhouldeſt no ſooner do the one than I would the other; *thou wilt have a deſire*, I am now ſuppoſing thee to have it, *to the work of thy hands*. So I have always inclined to think the meaning of this verſe moſt probably is. Others however, I obſerve to explain it of ſuch a deſire in Job to be now called into judgment with God, and to have ſuch an opportunity of pleading his cauſe before him, as we have already ſeen ſomething of in the third and fourth verſes, and may ſee much more of in chap. xiii. 20, &c. and in other places. But however this may be, nothing ſurely can be plainer than this is, that all which Job has been of late ſaying is of the ſoothing and imaginary kind only,

and the conſequence, as obſerved before, of a willingneſs to deceive himſelf, if he could, into ſomething like comfort; the which not being able after all to do, ſo much more powerful is nature than art, and feeling than fancy; we ſee him, according to Le Clerc and others, in the fifteenth verſe, and moſt certainly in the ſixteenth, awaking out of this dream as it were, to the feeling of his true and real ſituation, and thereupon renewing his former complainings, and continuing in them to the end, without the ſmalleſt reference to, or beam, or ray of hope reſpecting any other ſtate, the imaginary one excepted in verſe thirteenth, ſo far as I am able to diſcover.

I have however to ſubjoin a more comprehenſive and deciſive argument, and which may be applied perhaps with propriety to ſome other paſſages, if perchance any other, which I do not now recollect, ſhould be brought forward; that, I mean, which reſults from the conſideration of this book at large; of which the deſign ſeems to have been the repreſenting to us (whatever might be the poet's reaſon for chooſing ſuch a ſubject) a great and good man ſtruggling with as many and various afflictions as can be well conceived of, paſſing through them with inflexible perſeverance and virtue upon the whole, and as being to be at laſt rewarded for it, not in *another* but *this* world: which ſeems to give the reaſon, not only why no other is mentioned in it, (which muſt, if once referred to, have materially changed the ſtate of the argument betwixt Job and his friends, if not have finiſhed it) but to ſhew alſo how

how no other could have been mentioned with propriety. And agreeable to this hypotheſis we find that no other is mentioned in thoſe very places in which, had it been compatible with the general deſign, it might have been hinted at and brought forward with ſingular propriety; neither in thoſe chapters in which Elihu does at length come forward to moderate between the parties *; no, nor even in thoſe in which the Supreme Being is laſt of all introduced as finiſhing the whole †. And if not in theſe, where the opening is ſo fair, and ſomething of this ſort might, if admiſſible, have been expected; how can we at all wonder at the want of it, or think the omiſſion unaccountable, in the leſs conſpicuous places of the poem?

In the book of the Pſalms however this will ſcarcely be allowed to be the caſe; In this great repoſitory of devout thought and religious experience there are many paſſages quite full upon the ſubject, unleſs the readers, of almoſt every denomination, have been miſtaken. Theſe therefore I ſhall now conſider, with the view of determining whether there be indeed any ſuch reference, as has been often ſuppoſed, to a future life in them, or whether all of this ſort has been the conſequence only of a too haſty accommodation of modern and Chriſtian ideas to compoſitions of a much earlier age, and of a ſomewhat different though not contradictory diſpenſation?

* From xxxii—xxxvii.

† In chap. xxxviii. and following.

That

That this laſt has been the caſe with many in their expoſition, for inſtance, of the firſt Pſalm may be made, I ſuppoſe, ſufficiently evident. For upon what principles that are truly critical and juſt can we pretend to explain the *judgment* which is mentioned in it of the judgment of all mankind in the laſt day by Jeſus Chriſt, which ſeems to be the peculiar doctrine of the New Teſtament, and not rather of ſuch a preſent moral adminiſtration and providence of God over the world, and the then Jewiſh nation more particularly, as is ſo uniformly and expreſsly taught in almoſt every book of the Old Teſtament, and which perhaps modern divines, ſuppoſing themſelves to be in poſſeſſion of a completer ſyſtem, do not ſo much as they ſhould attend to? And ſo no doubt we ſhall beſt explain the like language and repreſentations of a judicial kind in the ſeventh, ninth, tenth and eleventh Pſalms, and that eſpecially in the fiftieth; in which, in the firſt and ſecond verſes, we obſerve the Supreme Being, who was always ſuppoſed to be reſident amongſt the Jews in the innermoſt part of the temple, to be moſt poetically and beautifully repreſented as coming forth from thence, to the judgment or reprehenſion of them;—in the fourth, fifth, and ſixth verſes, as ſummoning them before him for this purpoſe,—and then proceeding, in the following verſes to the end, to ſuch cenſure and reproof of them for their hypocriſy, formality and other vices, as does only well correſpond to the notion already ſuggeſted, of the general deſign and meaning of the

Pſalm. All which is, I truſt, ſo very evident as not only not to need further illuſtration, but even to ſerve as a key or principle, and be from time to time applied to the interpretation of divers other paſſages. Amongſt which I ſhall now only notice two, in the book of Eccleſiaſtes, more particularly. ---Chap. xi. 9, 10; *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all theſe things, God will bring thee into judgment.* It is immediately added, as if on purpoſe to explain the nature of this judgment, *Therefore remove ſorrow from thy heart, and put away evil,* or puniſhment, *from thy fleſh.* The like thought is ſuggeſted in chap. v. 6, *Suffer not thy mouth to cauſe thy fleſh* or body *to ſin,* to ſuffer under the pain or puniſhment of it; *neither ſay thou before the angel,* the miniſter of the divine diſpleaſure upon ſuch an occaſion, whatſoever it may be, *that it was an error:* do not reduce thyſelf to the neceſſity of making ſuch an apology. See alſo, in Prov. v. 11, &c. another and perhaps ſtill ſtronger illuſtration.---Chap. xii. 13, 14. *Let us hear the concluſion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole of man. For God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Here alſo I have my doubts, whether any thing more is intended than what is implied in ſuch paſſages as theſe; Numb. xxxii. 23. Job xxxiv. 20, 21, 22. Prov. xv. 3. Jer.

xxiii.

xxiii. 24; and in the notion ſuggeſted above of a preſent moral adminiſtration and providence; however the readers of the New Teſtament, having another judgment in proſpect, may rather chooſe to think of it in the reading. I alſo add below another reaſon *.

In other Pſalms however a future ſtate, more eſpecially of happineſs, has been ſuppoſed to be referred to, in language ſcarcely leſs explicit than that of the New Teſtament. Of theſe the following have been uſually ſuppoſed the moſt remarkable. Pſalm xvii. thirteenth verſe and following. *Deliver my ſoul from the wicked, which is thy ſword: From men*

* That, I mean, which ariſes from the conſideration of the peculiar character and deſign of the whole book; which ſeems to have been, to repreſent eaſe and pleaſure, of the *virtuous* kind, as the chief good of man in this life, and to recommend the purſuit and enjoyment of them under this limitation, without reference to any other life, ſo far as I am able to diſcover. And to this notion I am the more inclined by obſerving the agreeableneſs of this book to Sir William Temple, who is well known to have been much ſuch a man and philoſopher; and the cordial manner in which he has mentioned both the book and its author, in his Eſſays in divers places.

What we read in chap. xii. 7. is in perfect conſiſtency with this, if underſtood, as it ought to be, philoſophically and phyſically, rather than religiouſly; being an evident alluſion to Gen. ii. 7. and a deſcription of the reſolution of man's nature, when he dies, into earth and God again, anſwerable to the account which is there given of its formation at firſt;—And ſo no doubt we are to explain, in chap. iii. 23. *the ſpirit of man that goeth upward, and the ſpirit of the beaſt that goeth downward to the earth:* with reference, I mean, to the account which is given of the original of each reſpectively, in Gen. ii. 7; and chap. i. 24.

which are thy hand, O LORD, *from men of the world, which have their portion in this life,* literally, "in lives," meaning no doubt in the enjoyment of life, or in pleaſurable living; *and whoſe belly thou filleſt with what is hidden*; with ſuch luxuries as are not in the way and within the reach of the greater number of perſons: *they are full of children, and leave the remainder of their ſubſtance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs;* will draw near to thee in the temple where thou reſideſt; and art there wont to reveal thyſelf to thy worſhippers in a gracious manner: I hope I ſhall be permitted to do ſo*;—*I ſhall be ſatisfied with,* or at, *the awaking of thy likeneſs:* an expreſſion which may either refer to the ſhining forth of the Schechinal, or glorious cloud in the temple, that ſymbol of the Divine preſence there, in token of the acceptableneſs of his worſhip and devotion; (which it ſhould ſeem from ſome paſſages in the Old Teſtament was ſometimes the caſe) or to ſuch a ſenſible diſplay of the Divine interpoſition and providence in his behalf as he has been through the whole Pſalm praying for; and it is of no importance to which of theſe two we give the preference. As if he had ſaid, ſuch worldly fulneſs and proſperity is their delight, and thy houſe and worſhip and the ſatisfaction which they afford is mine. For which ſee Pſalm iv. 6, in

* *In righteouſneſs,* may either mean in circumſtances of ſafety and ſalvation, as in Pſ. lxxi. 15. or may perhaps be beſt explained by Pſ. xxvi. 6. I know not which of the two is preferable.

ſome-

ſomewhat further illuſtration. Others however have explained the paſſage differently; of which the following extract from Dr. Hammond will ſuggeſt both the notion and its confutation. "The difficulty is, to what, *at the awaking*, ſhall belong. The Chaldee applies it to David; *When I ſhall awake, I ſhall be ſatisfied with the glory of thy countenance*, and ſo it hath truth, in reſpect of the Reſurrection of the juſt, and that not unfitly oppoſed to the abundance of the worldly men, verſe fourteenth, in this life. But all the other interpreters agree in applying it to, *thy glory*. *At the appearing of thy glory*, ſay the Seventy. *Cum apparuerit gloria tua* *, the Latin, and ſo the Arabic and Ethiopic. *When thy fidelity ſhall awake*, ſaith the Syriac. And ſo moſt probably it is to be underſtood; by God's *glory awaking*, ſignifying his glorious and powerful interpoſition to his preſent reſcue from his enemies hands.---And thus the learned Caſtalio took it, *tum ſatiandus, cum tua experrecta fuerit imago, I ſhall be ſatisfied, when thy likeneſs ſhall be awaked.*" It is ſomewhat curious to obſerve in this paſſage, how the learned writer, as he proceeds, gets the better of his own uncertainty; ſo as to make one wonder, with ſuch evidence before him as is here brought together, how he ſhould have felt any difficulty. See alſo in the paſſages below ſome further evidence and illuſtration †.

* When thy glory ſhall appear.

† Pſ. vii. 6. xxiii. ult. xxvii. 4. xxxv. 22, 23. xliv. 23. lxiii. 2. lxxiii. 20. lxxviii. 65. lxxx. 1, 2, 3.

Pſ. xvi. 9, 10, 11. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory*, that which I eſteem to be ſuch, becauſe I am able to praiſe thee with it, *rejoiceth: my fleſh alſo*, or whole frame, and not my tongue only, *ſhall reſt*, more exactly, dwell or abide, *in confidence*, in this hope or confidence; *That thou wilt not leave my ſoul* or life *in the grave*; permit me to die or periſh under the diſtreſs to which I am now reduced, (for which ſee verſe firſt)---*neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy one*, more literally, thy favoured or beloved one, *to ſee corruption*, wilt not at preſent I hope, and till his work is done, ſuffer him to do ſo. The Pſalmiſt does here conſider himſelf, unleſs I am miſtaken, as ſome peculiarly favourite and choſen agent or inſtrument in the hand of God, and does upon this principally build his confidence. *Thou wilt ſhew me*, I truſt and doubt not thou wilt, *the path of life*, ſome way or other of eſcape and of reſtoration. *In thy preſence*; in the temple where thou art graciouſly preſent, and to the worſhip of which I hope to be ſoon reſtored, *there is fulneſs of joy*; (we have had much the ſame idea before upon Pſ. xvii. ult.)---*at thy right hand*, or perhaps, from or by it, *there are pleaſures everlaſting*; as Schultens is ſuppoſed by Taylor in his Concordance, to have given the better meaning.---They who may conſider all this as ſcarcely equal to the ſeeming warmth and fulneſs of the Pſalmiſt's expreſſions are deſired to reflect upon theſe particulars; firſt, the remarkable ſameneſs in ſubſtance of the whole of this paſſage with another, in Pſ. xxxvi. 8, 9, where it

ſeems ſufficiently evident that the temple worſhip, under much the ſame language, is only intended; ---ſecondly, whether the phraſe, "*at* thy right hand," which has in the New Teſtament a ſort of ſyſtematic and particularly elevated ſenſe, may not in ſome degree tend to miſlead a modern reader, when it is really none other in the original than what is juſtly tranſlated in the Pſalm but lately before us, Pſ. xvii. 7. "*O thou that ſaveſt by thy right hand, them which put their truſt in thee;*" and thirdly, (which has great weight with me) that the celebrated Mr. Addiſon, than whom perhaps no man ever thought more juſtly and naturally, or brought with him to the reading of the Scriptures more genuine ſimplicity, appears to have ſeen this paſſage, ſo far as relates to this argument, in no other light; See the Spectator, vol. vi. No. 471. A circumſtance which obſerved by me many years ago had great influence in fixing my then heſitating mind, as it may perhaps the minds of ſome other perſons.

Pſ. lxxiii. 23d verſe and following. *Nevertheleſs, I am continually with thee*, in thy keeping or preſervation; *thou haſt holden me*, as it were, *by my right hand*, when in danger of falling, as it were; See the firſt and ſecond verſes in illuſtration. And I would fain believe thou wilt do ſo ſtill, and not only now, but always ſo preſerve me. *Thou ſhalt guide me by thy council*, I hope thou wilt; *and after* having ſo counſelled or guided me, receive or *take*

me *, that is, out of theſe troubles or deſpondencies,

* *Receive* or *take* me. The latter is perhaps the better word of the two, both here and in Pſ. xlix. 15; the Pſalmiſt ſeeming to intend, as appears from the 1ſt, 2d, and 23d verſes, the being laid hold of or taken as it were by the hand from difficulty or danger, which it well expreſſes; and the other perhaps ſuggeſting to ſome readers ſuch an idea as that in John xiv. 3. which is not here, I ſuppoſe, the true one. This at leaſt is certain, that the Seventy could have no ſuch idea, who have tranſlated the paſſage, whether rightly or not, in the paſt time; "By thy counçel thou haſt led me by the way, and haſt laid hold of me with glory." And ſo alſo the Latin vulgate, *In voluntate tua deduxiſti me, et cum gloria ſuſcepiſti me*; for which the ſame tranſlation may ſerve. And in like manner Grotius, whoſe comment I tranſcribe; "*Et cum honore excepiſti me.* Feciſti me regem. Nam Aſaphus hæc compoſuit in laudem Davidis." (Haſt taken me with honour, and made me king. For this Pſalm was compoſed by Aſaph for the uſe of David.)—Let this be true, and it would ſeem to follow from it, that inſtead of the word *glory* in the paſſage under conſideration, which is apt to put the evangelical and modern reader in mind of "that ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus with eternal glory," the word *honour*, in the ſenſe in which it is uſed in 1 Sam. ii. 30. Eccleſ. ii. ult. would have been better choſen; as I ſuppoſe it would have been for the ſame reaſon in Pſ. lxxxiv. 11th; however agreeably "*grace* here and *glory* hereafter," may ſound in a modern prayer or ſermon. It would indeed be no very eaſy undertaking to enumerate all the places in the Old Teſtament in which ſuch words as, *grace*, *glory*, *redemption*, *righteouſneſs*, *juſtification*, and *ſalvation*, &c. have certain ſenſes impoſed upon them, taken from the New Teſtament, which the writers of them did probably not think of. By which however I would not be underſtood to condemn all occaſional reference to them, and a pious and popular accommodation of them to the ſubjects and perſons mentioned in the New Teſtament, in books and ſermons merely practical, and in which exactneſs of criticiſm is not neceſſary.—"That God

dencies, *with glory* *; in a glorious and triumphant manner. This I hope thou wilt do: *For whom have I in heaven*, ſo to truſt or confide in, *but thee? And there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee* in this reſpect. *My fleſh and my heart faileth*; they have done ſo already, and may do ſo again; *but God is the ſtrength of my heart*, I now feel a courage diſpoſing me to ſay ſo; *and my portion*, the object of my choice, love, and ſervice, not only now, but *for ever*. It is added, and ſeemingly in further illuſtration of this meaning, *For lo, they that are far from thee*, who do not ſo chooſe thee for their portion or lot, and ſerve thee accordingly, *ſhall periſh: thou haſt deſtroyed all them that go a whoring from thee*, or are guilty of idolatry. *But it is good for me*, whatever others do, *to draw near unto God: I will put my truſt in the* LORD *God, that I may declare all thy works*; may have cauſe, as I truſt I then ſhall have, to do ſo. Such is the additional part

God would lead us *down* to death and *up* to glory," was I have reaſon to think a never-failing petition in the prayers both public and private of a very ſerious miniſter many years ago, and has I hope in his caſe been anſwered. May it be thine, reader, and mine alſo.

* So the margin, and the verſion in the Common Prayer. And may I not here ſubjoin, as not quite impertinent to the ſubject, Pſ. cxlix. 5. *Let the ſaints be joyful in glory*, or triumph glorioufly; *let them ſing aloud upon their beds*; upon thoſe ſofas or couches on which they ſit at their ſacrifical and feſtival entertainments, before they go forth againſt the enemy. So the beſt commentators explain, and the verſes following abundantly juſtify.

and

and concluſion of the Pſalm; and as ſeems to me not a little obſervable, with reſpect to the ſubject under conſideration; as, had the Pſalmiſt's thoughts in the 24th, 25th, and 26th verſes gone ſo far as ſome chooſe to ſuppoſe, it is not, I apprehend, eaſily conceivable how he ſhould afterwards, in the 27th and 28th verſes, take ſo comparatively low a flight, and loſe ſight ſo ſoon, and ſo willingly of the heavenly felicity. But the caſe was evidently otherwiſe. He is ſpeaking in the former, as a Jew only, of ſuch honour or glory as is often mentioned in the Old Teſtament, in a ſenſe very inferior to that which the term ſometimes bears in the New; and of God, as being his lot or portion, in ſuch a ſenſe and way as he was of the Iſraelites, by way of diſtinction from the Heathens and idolators; See Pſ. xvi. 5. cxlii. 5. Lament. iii. 24, in illuſtration; which is not ſufficient perhaps to ſupport in their utmoſt extent all the ideas which ſome have been wont to affix to the expreſſion. I may here alſo, perhaps with as much propriety as any where, bring into view the ideas of another Pſalm, by no means foreign to this ſubject; I mean the thirty-ſeventh; which treats ſomewhat largely upon the different characters and ends of the righteous and the wicked, and of which it may be obſerved that this is all the doctrine, viz. that the righteous ſhall inherit the earth, and delight himſelf in the abundance of peace, and at laſt die in peace, &c. whereas the evil doers ſhould be ſoon and ſuddenly cut off, and not be found, though ſought for, &c: and nothing more ſo far as I am

able

able to diſcover. And yet this Pſalm is of conſiderable length, treats wholly upon theſe ſubjects, and ſeems to have been with much coolneſs and deliberation of thought put together. And how then can we reaſonably expect the author of it to proceed further, in almoſt any other Pſalm, which is not perhaps ſo profeſſedly and largely written on theſe ſubjects.

And for this reaſon, in part at leaſt, I have my doubts, whether in this other paſſage, Pſ. xlix. 15. *But God will redeem my ſoul*, or life, *from the power of the grave; for he will take me*, any thing more is meant than the being taken or delivered from ſuch viſitations of the providential and judicial kind as are in the 37th Pſalm ſo frequently referred to; and the rather, as there ſeems to be in the preceding verſe an obvious reference to ſomething of this ſort. *Like ſheep they are laid in the grave*, the worthleſs and wicked perſons he has before been deſcribing; *death ſhall feed upon them*; for which ſee further, Job xxiv. 20; *and the upright ſhall have dominion over them in the morning*; an expreſſion which ſeems to refer to ſome ſuppoſed deſtruction of them in the night, and viſible diſtinction in favour of the righteous, to be ſeen in the morning; from whence ſoever the language and imagery are taken *. For that by the morn-

* Not improbably from what we read of the Egyptians and the Iſraelites in Exodus xii; or of the ſlaughter of the Aſſyrians by night in 2 Kings xix. 35. in caſe this Pſalm was written ſo late as after this event.—See alſo in further illuſtration,

morning here is meant the morning of the Reſurrection, as we do ſometimes now prettily ſpeak, the Pſalmiſt was not, I conceive, ſo much of a modern or Chriſtian as to have the notion of *.

In ſome other Pſalms a future ſtate of puniſhment rather than reward has been ſuppoſed by ſome to be intended; but I doubt whether truely. When, for inſtance, it is ſaid in Pſ. ix. 17. that *the wicked ſhall be turned into hell*, or ſheol, (of which hereafter) we ſeem to be able to collect the meaning with abundant clearneſs from the two preceding verſes, from Pſ. i. ult. cxlvi. 9th, and other ſimilar paſſages. In like manner may the ſenſe of Prov. xv. 24. be ſuppoſed to be given, only in other words, in chap. xii. 28th; neither can that of chap. xxi. 16. be very different. And though I would not willingly detract from the awful ſolemnity of Ezekiel xxxiii. 11. nor even ſeem to diſapprove of the good and holy uſe made of it by Mr. Baxter † and others in their ſermons and writings, yet I know not how it can be denied that there is that

tion, Job vii. ult. xx. 7, 8, 9. xxvii. 20. xxxiv. 20, 25. xxxvi. 20; and further, though not of equal importance, Pſ. xxx. 5. xci. 6. Prov. iii. 24, 25.

* "And doubtleſs God will reſcue me from that imminent "danger, wherein I am, (ver. 5th) of being deſtroyed, and "not let me deſcend into the grave, but live to have domi-"nion over them." Bp. Patrick on the place. And ſo alſo Le Clerc; *me morti eripiet, vetabit ne hoſtium meorum manu, aut morbo correptus immatura morte cadam:—præſentiſſimo mortis periculo eripiet.*—"Will ſnatch me from the danger, and neither ſuffer me to die by violence, nor prematurely."

† In his *Call to the Unconverted.*

in

in this book and even chapter *, as well as in the very ſimilar paſſage in Deuteronomy, chap. xxx. 15---19. which may reaſonably lead us to explain it in a ſomewhat lower way, and rather of the then preſent exiſtence and proſperity, or otherwiſe, of the Jewiſh church and nation at large, than of the future ſtate and life and death eternal of individuals.

Next to this, and by no means of leſs importance upon this argument, is the well known paſſage in Daniel, chap, xii. 1, 2, and 3d verſes; which has been not uncommonly ſuppoſed, by thoſe who more attend to the ſound of words than the ſituation in which they are found, to refer to the ſtates both of reward and of puniſhment equally. But if it ſhall hereafter appear, as I ſuppoſe it may, that they refer to a very different period of time than the end of the world, and are only deſigned to repreſent, though in ſomewhat bright and figurative language, thoſe oppoſite circumſtances of honour or diſgrace under which the Jews of different deſcriptions would come again from their reſpective covertures and hiding places, as they had behaved themſelves conſiſtently or otherwiſe, during the moſt extreme perſecution of their church and nation by Antiochus Epiphanes, it will then have no other relation to this ſubject than ſome other paſſages of the Old Teſtament of the ſame figurative kind, of which perhaps hereafter ſome notice may be taken.

* See chap. xxviii. throughout; and in this chapter, ver. 2d and following, and 27th more eſpecially.

Till

Till then therefore I defer it, only wiſhing the reader to obſerve this one particular for the preſent, becauſe it is ſo obvious, viz. that the rewards and puniſhments, if we will call them ſo, have nothing peculiar to eternity in them, but may, for ought that appears, have their effects in this ſtate only; the *everlaſting life* which is mentioned in one member of the paſſage being oppoſed only by *ſhame* and *everlaſting contempt* in the other; which ſeems ſufficiently to aſcertain its meaning; and how often and for what obvious reaſons *everlaſting* and for *ever* are ſometimes applied in the Scriptures to things only temporal can be ſcarcely unknown to almoſt any readers *.

And beſides this I recollect not any other paſſage which need to be now mentioned, unleſs this in the book of Proverbs ſhould be thought to be of this nature; chap. xiv. 32. *The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs, but the righteous hath hope in his death*; that is, of eſcaping death, as Le Clerc explains the paſſage, referring to Pſ. ix. 3, 4; xxxiii.

* The proper meaning of the Hebrew word *Olam* is *interminable duration*, or of which the end, if any, cannot be aſcertained; and is therefore applied to the exiſtence of God, the duration of the world, and the life of man, with the ſame propriety; and does really expreſs the eternity of God no otherwiſe than as perſons ſo uſing it ſupply as it were all the reſt from their knowledge of the ſubject ſpoken of, and their immediate perception of the abſurdity of ſuppoſing, that what had no beginning ſhould have an end. See for the duration of the world, Gen. xlix. 26. Eccleſ. i. 4. &c. And of man's life, Exod. xxi. 6. Pſ. xxiii. ult; xxxvii. 29, &c. &c.—To Matt. xxv. ult. theſe remarks are applicable.

19; and lvi. ult. in illuſtration. And ſo alſo Bp. Patrick, whoſe words are theſe, "When a wicked man falls into calamity his heart fails him, and he is driven away from all his confidents, like the chaff before the wind, by the conſciouſneſs of his own wickedneſs: but a righteous man is not diſmayed in the greateſt dangers; but remains ſteady and confident even in death itſelf." But allowing to the laſt member of this verſe a ſomewhat nearer reference to this ſubject, yet what in reſpect of the preſent argument will be the amount of it? There are hopes ariſing from reaſon and nature, ſuch as the virtuous Socrates is ſuppoſed to have had; and others which ground themſelves more immediately upon revelation and the promiſes of God in Scripture; and it ſhould ſeem to be to the former ſort rather than the latter, if to either, that the words are referrible. I may therefore, I ſuppoſe, conclude, that neither in this paſſage, nor in any other, we have yet met with any thing deſerving to be called knowledge, or revealed truth, or doctrine, upon this ſubject, the ſubject of a future ſtate or Reſurrection; but rather the contrary; and ſuch an abſence generally of all ideas of this kind, both conjectural and poſitive, as may ſeem, the largeneſs of the Old Teſtament as a book conſidered, and the religious nature of its ſubjects from the beginning to the end, to be rather wonderful. By which however I do not mean to deny the juſtneſs of our Saviour's cenſure and reproof of theſe Sadducees, as not knowing the Scriptures, notwithſtanding. For firſt, who ſhall ſay, that the ſtories of Abel and of Enoch,

to

to which the very ſimilar one concerning Elijah, in 2 Kings, chap. ii. might be added, have no relation to it whatſoever? Or ſecondly, that theſe Sadducees, acknowledging, as they certainly did, the moral character and perfections of God, which are ſo ſtrongly and frequently inſiſted upon in the Old Teſtament, and at the ſame time obſerving the inequality of ſome of the preſent diſpenſations of the Divine Providence, ſhould not have inferred from thence, as divers modern divines are ſuppoſed with much truth and juſtice to have done ſince, the probability at leaſt of a future ſtate, and of a more full and complete adminiſtration of rewards and puniſhments, even though they may be acknowledged to have had no expreſs revelation on the ſubject *? Or thirdly, that that peculiar ſpirit of devotion and of piety, which runs through the books of the Old Teſtanient, and is found in theſe only; and which nothing, it is ſaid, but the proſpect of ſomething beyond the grave could have poſſibly ſupported; ſhould not have been of ſome weight and influence with them in their deliberations upon the ſubject †?---But this, it ſeems, was ſo

* It is ſomewhere well obſerved by Dr. Taylor, who was himſelf, in reſpect of the arguments for a future ſtate drawn from the metaphyſical and abſtract nature of the ſoul, a ſort of Chriſtian Sadducee, that, when theſe are given up, thoſe of a moral nature will ſtill remain as formerly.

† "The ſtrain of piety and devotion which diſcovers itſelf," ſays Jortin, "in the books of the Old Teſtament, and diſtinguiſhes them ſo eminently from all ancient Pagan compoſitions, is a proof, and indeed a moſt convincing proof, to me at

ſo far from being the caſe, that we cannot on the at leaſt, that the authors entertained hopes beyond the preſent ſtate and ſcene of things.

" The ſacred writers had as deep a ſenſe of the emptineſs of human enjoyments, and of the vanity of the preſent tranſitory world, as any Pagan authors, and have deſcribed it with as much energy and eloquence.—And yet the ſame writings overflow with the warmeſt ſentiments of piety, repreſent God as the Father and Friend of the righteous, whoſe favour and loving kindneſs is better than all worldly bleſſings, better than life itſelf; to whom is due, not only the profoundeſt veneration, but the ſincereſt love; who is the object of faith and truſt and reliance, and to obey whom is the trueſt wiſdom. A language by no means ſuitable to the doctrine of the ſoul's mortality, and which could only proceed from the lips, but never from the heart of one who had no hopes beyond the grave.—He to whom ſo little had been given, could love but little. What ſhould inflame his affections, and excite in him ſuch lively ſentiments of the immenſe kindneſs and goodneſs of God? Who ever heard of ſuch a thing as a devout Epicurean? The thought of periſhing ſoon, and of being ſtruck out of the liſt of God's creatures, would caſt a damp as cold as death upon all his attempts towards devotion; and the nearer he drew to his fatal end, the leſs regard he would have for his Creator. All that he could do would be to arm himſelf with ſtubborn reſolution, and endeavour to reſign with a good grace what would be ſoon taken from him; but zeal for the honour and glory of God, a religious ſorrow for his offences, a deſire to pleaſe his Maker, pious love and devout ſupplication; theſe affections could never take up their abode in his breaſt." So Dr. Jortin, in his Sermons, vol. vii. p. 318, &c; and, as ſeems to me, with ſome appearance of reaſon. " But why then did they not expreſs themſelves more fully upon this delightful ſubject, if this were the caſe with them, and when the opportunities of doing it were ſo obvious, and came ſo frequently before them?" So perhaps ſome perſons may ſay in way of anſwer, and thus render ſomewhat doubtful an argument, which will ſtill however, I apprehend, be of weight, and the moſt weight, with the moſt devout and affectionate.

contrary very eaſily conceive of a more unqualified and abſolute infidelity. Some few paſſages reſpecting this, may not be now improper to be mentioned.

Acts xxiii. 6, 7, 8. *But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee: of the hope and Reſurrection of the dead I am called in queſtion.* (I inſert, for the ſake of bringing all belonging to the ſame ſubject together, theſe other words in chap. xxiv. 15. ſpoken by him upon a ſimilar occaſion; *And have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt). And when he had ſo ſaid, there aroſe a diſſention between the Phariſees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees ſay, that there is no Reſurrection* of the dead to life again, *neither angel, nor ſpirit*; no ſuch permanent and real beings as angels or meſſengers from heaven, however upon ſome occaſions ſuch phantoms or appearances of them may have been made uſe of, nor any ſuch thing as immaterial ſubſtance whatſoever. So I conceive the laſt of theſe expreſſions muſt mean, the caſe of the dead and of angels being in the former ſpoken to. And if ſo, what could be more abſolute and unqualified than the unbelief upon theſe ſubjects of theſe Sadducees? which ſeems to have gone to the diſavowal of all purely intellectual and immaterial being, unleſs perhaps that of the Supreme is to be excepted?

Let

Let us now hear another Jewiſh writer. Says Joſephus, ſpeaking of the Phariſees, in his Jewiſh War, Book II. chap. viii. ſec. 14; "They believe "that every ſoul is incorruptible; but that the "ſouls of the good only paſs into other bodies, "and that the ſouls of the bad are ſubject to eter- "nal puniſhment.---But the Sadducees take away "the belief of the duration of the ſoul, and the "puniſhments and rewards in Hades."----And again, in his Antiquities, Book xviii. chap. 1. ſec. 3, 4. ſpeaking of the Phariſees, he ſays, "Their be- "lief is, that there is an immortal vigour in ſouls, "and that under the earth there are rewards and "puniſhments for thoſe who have in this life "practiſed virtue or vice; and that to the latter "an eternal priſon is appointed, but that the other "ſhall live again.---The doctrine of the Sadducees "is this, that ſouls die with the bodies. Neither is "it a point with them to believe any thing, ſave "what the law enjoins them. For as to what is "called wiſdom [or philoſophy] they make a merit "of oppoſing, when they have opportunity, thoſe "who teach it." Here the oppoſition which is aſſerted to have been put by the Sadducees between the law and wiſdom, that is, the wiſdom of the Greeks, or their philoſophy *, and which it ſeems was peculiar to them, is very obſervable; and that this ſhould be immediately mentioned by Joſephus after his account of their opinion of the ſoul, &c. and given by him as their reaſon for it, is ſtill more

* So alſo St. Paul, in 1 Cor. i. 22, &c.

ſo, and plainly ſhews what at leaſt was the argument of the Sadducees upon this ſubject, viz. that in the law, the law of Moſes and other books of Scripture (for the oppoſition we may obſerve is not between the law and the prophets, but the law and wiſdom *) they found nothing of the ſoul's future life or immortality aſſerted, and that they therefore could not receive and admit it, who did not acknowledge any other authority; whereas the Phariſees did ſubjoin to this, either as of equal authority, or however as of ſome authority and uſe, the philoſophy of the Greeks, and from thence, and not the law, drew their opinions. So Joſephus ſeems to me to repreſent the matter, and to be ſo far in agreement, or however in no obvious diſagreement,

* Says Joſephus, in his Antiquities, Book xiii. chap. x. ſec. 6. in Mr. Whiſton's tranſlation,—"The Phariſees have delivered to the people a great many obſervances by ſucceſſion from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moſes: and for that reaſon the ſect of the Sadducees reject them; and ſay, that we are to eſteem thoſe obſervances to be obligatory which are in the written word; but are not to obſerve what are derived from the tradition of our fore-fathers."—Here too it is, I think, as plain as need be, that the oppoſition is only between the *unwritten* traditions and the *written* word at large, and that the former only were rejected by the Sadducees; and yet upon no other ground than this principally has the notion been in general received, and in all probability falſely, that the Sadducees did only receive, as of Divine authority, the five books of Moſes. That thoſe books were the books of the law by way of eminence, and held in ſome particular reſpect by the Jews, as their firſt books and more fundamental than the reſt, may be reckoned probable. But upon what evidence, ſave ſuch as is invidious and imaginary only, are we to diſtinguiſh in this caſe between the Jews at large and the Sadducees?

with

with the writers of the New Teſtament in what they have written of the Sadducees.

But not, as ſome may think, in reſpect of the Phariſees, who may poſſibly ſeem to ſome to be rather repreſented by him as maintaining the Platonic and Pythagorean doctrines of a metempſychoſis or tranſmigration, than the purely Chriſtian notion of the Reſurrection. To which perhaps we may be allowed to anſwer, firſt, that St. Paul being a man of addreſs, and not of faith and zeal only, (of which his diſcourſe in Acts xvii. and his Epiſtle to Philemon are uſually reckoned inſtances) may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, in the ſituations in which the paſſages in the Acts repreſent him, to have made the moſt of any coincidence of opinion between himſelf and the Phariſees. This very mode of expreſſion in the hiſtory, *But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee,* is confirming to me of this circumſtance. Neither ſecondly, does this other ſeem a leſs reaſonable ſuppoſition to be made, that Joſephus alſo, who is well known and allowed to have heathenized in his hiſtory ſometimes, for the ſake of pleaſing his Roman maſters, may have poſſibly done it, and perhaps without much diſpleaſure to himſelf, in this inſtance. To which may be added, and as of greater weight perhaps than either of the former ſuppoſitions, this other, in the third place, of a real difference of opinion amongſt the Phariſees themſelves probably upon

this ſubject; a ſubject upon which their own Scriptures do not appear to have taught them much, which muſt have been much under the influence of imagination and conjecture when they ſhould chooſe to think upon it, and which the philoſophy or wiſdom of the Greeks, to which they inclined, was not likely to bring to a more certain iſſue. And why then not ſuppoſe that St. Paul and Joſephus may be both in the right, only ſpeaking of the Phariſees of different times, or of ſuch amongſt them as, at the ſame time, might think upon ſo abſtract, remote, and difficult a ſubject, ſomewhat differently? This I take to have been the truth of the caſe, and the only juſt concluſion from the whole to be of courſe this, that according to ſome tolerable conſtruction and mode of interpretation or other, the Phariſees did all believe, what the Sadducees ſeem with equal univerſality and in every ſenſe to have denied, a future life or Reſurrection. But it does, I think, by no means hence follow, that the Phariſaic faith upon this ſubject was always and uniformly right, and in perfect agreement with the teachings of Jeſus, any more than the Sadducean infidelity; though we are not now able with equal clearneſs to prove the point. Yea, in one inſtance we have ſeen it, according to Joſephus, to be very different; the Phariſees, according to him, reſolving into ſome ſecret vigour or immortal power in ſouls, what we have ſeen to be placed by Jeſus upon a very different baſis; the Scriptures, and the power of God. And who can be ſure that

that there was not upon this ſubject ſome other difference?

I SHALL now conſider, in a ſort of APPENDIX to the preceding chapter, certain paſſages in the book of Geneſis, which were paſſed over at what may ſeem to ſome to have been the moſt proper time and place; (becauſe not reckoned of ſufficient importance to be then and there conſidered) but of which perhaps ſome notice ſhould be taken. Such as chap. xxv. 8, 17; chap. xxxv. 29, and xlix. 29, 33, in which we read of being *gathered to our fathers* or *people*;---and this in chap. xxxvii. 39, in which we read of *going down to them into the grave*, or ſheol, of which hereafter---to which this other of a kindred ſort may be added, in 2 Sam. xii. 23, *I ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not return to me.* Of all which paſſages, as well as ſome others in the other books of Scripture, and which are to be explained, I conceive, upon the ſame principle, (as Job iii. 13---19. chap. xvii. 13, 14. Eccl. xii. 5. Iſa. lvii. 2. &c.) I am inclined to think the true account is this only, that, like the *vixit* of the Romans, as Montaigne has explained it *, they are only ſo many ſoothing modes of expreſſion, by which the perſons uſing them were willing to deceive

* *Vixit*, he hath lived.—"The Romans," ſays this writer, "obſerving that this monoſyllable *death* was very ſhocking to "the people's ears, found out a way to ſoften it, and inſtead "of ſaying in plain terms, ſuch a one is dead, to ſay, ſuch a "one *has lived*, or ceaſed to live: if there was but any men-"tion of life, though of life that was paſſed, it ſeemed to be "ſome conſolation." Eſſays, Vol. I. chap. xix.

themſelves into ſomething like comfort, and to cover over the horrors of the grave as much as poſſible *.

But not ſo, it ſeems, ſome other perſons, and more eſpecially a late learned writer †; who has endeavoured to aſſign to them a much more important meaning, and to ground upon it ſuch a train of ideas, concerning the nature of death and of the human ſoul, as have not yet been before us. I ſhall therefore conſider this writer's argument, ſo far as it is grounded upon theſe paſſages; and the rather, as it is elaborately drawn up, ſomewhat earneſtly enforced, and has not been yet conſidered that I know of by any other perſon.

"As this," ſays Mr. Farmer, in his Introduction, p. xxvii, and following, "is a point on "which great ſtreſs is laid by different contending "parties (he means the meaning of the word *death* in the denunciation of it againſt Adam in Gen. iii.) "I ſhall take the liberty to ſuggeſt a few conſi- "derations tending to confirm the foregoing inter- "pretation of death,"---he means, as denoting the deſtruction of the body only.

"It may be obſerved in the firſt place, that al- "though one great deſign of Moſes, in giving an "account of the introduction of death into the "world, was to guard againſt the worſhip of de- "parted ſpirits, (this I conceive to be a mere

* It is, I believe, a rather common obſervation, that no man can long look upon death with a ſteady countenance.

† The reverend Mr. Hugh Farmer, in his work entitled, *The General Prevalence of the Worſhip of Human Spirits, in the Ancient Heathen Nations, aſſerted and proved.* See the paſſages hereafter quoted.

gratuitous

gratuitous aſſumption) and though nothing could "have anſwered this deſign more effectually than "repreſenting the ſoul of Adam as a mere quality, "or as the reſult of the peculiar ſtructure and or-"ganization of his body; yet, ſo far is he from "ſuppoſing this to be the caſe, that, according to "him, after the body of the firſt man was per-"fectly organized by the immediate hand of heaven, "he did not become a *living ſoul* or *perſon*, *till* "*God breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life:* "a principle diſtinct from the *duſt*, *out of which* "*his body was formed*, and therefore capable of "ſubſiſting in a ſtate of ſeparation from it."--- Anſwer, whether the ſoul of man was the reſult of the peculiar ſtructure and organization of his body, or the effect of ſuch an in-breathing as mentioned above, does not ſeem in this argument to be of any great conſequence; but the right reſolution of this queſtion only, viz. Whether, from ſuch an in-breathing as Moſes ſpeaks of, we can with certainty infer the ſoul's capacity of a ſeparate ſubſiſtence? And to me it ſeems, as if the author of the book of Eccleſiaſtes at leaſt had not inferred ſo much from it; but rather the contrary: (See the note above upon chap. xii. 7.) neither is ſo much perhaps of neceſſity inferrible.——"Neither," adds Mr. Farmer, "does Moſes uſe the ſame language in relating the "formation of any other living creature: which "is a proof that the principle of life in man is "of a ſuperior kind to that in brutes."——It may be ſo, and yet not perhaps of ſo peculiarly high a kind, as to be capable of a ſeparate ſubſiſtence,

ſiſtence, which is the point we are now inquiring after. See the ſame note again in illuſtration.

" Secondly," ſays Mr. Farmer, (which brings the paſſages in queſtion more immediately before us) " The ancient Patriarchs did not believe that " the ſoul of man periſhed with the body. The " moſt ancient opinion, concerning departed ſpirits, " that we meet with in the heathen records, was, " that they deſcended into a ſubterraneous region, " or a place *inviſible* to human ſight, called by the " Hebrews, *ſheol*, and by the Greeks, *hades*; and " that, in this place, perſons of the ſame nation, " tribe, and family, and alſo thoſe who were united " in the bonds of friendſhip, aſſociated, and dwelt " together. The ſacred writers entertained the " ſame opinion, ſuppoſed the ſouls of the dead to " exiſt in *ſheol* or *hades* *, and that, in the diſtri- " bution of them, regard was had to the former " relation in which they ſtood to one another †.

" It

* " The references in Scripture to the abode of the ſouls of " the dead are exceedingly numerous. Many of them are " taken notice of in *Eſſay on the Dæmoniacs*, p. 211. *et ſeq.* and " below in note †. In Job, chap. xxvi. 5. it is ſaid in the " original, *The giants* (probably the ghoſts of thoſe who pe- " riſhed in the flood) *tremble under the waters, together with their " fellow inhabitants.* This verſion which was given in the *Eſſay* " (ubi ſupra) has ſince been confirmed by the higheſt autho- " rity, ſo far, I mean, as ſerves my purpoſe in this place:

" *The mighty dead tremble from beneath:*
" *The waters, and they that dwell therein:*

" Bp. Lowth's Iſa. Prelim. Diſſ. p. xv."

† " To this diſtribution there is a reference in Ezek. xxxii. " 22, and alſo in thoſe words aſcribed to Samuel, 1 Sam.

" xxviii.

" It is in manifeſt alluſion to this opinion, that " the ſacred writers deſcribe the dead as being *ga-* " *thered to their people*, and that Jacob ſaid, *I* " *will go down into ſheol unto my ſon* *. When " Jacob uttered theſe words, he believed that Jo- " ſeph had been devoured by wild beaſts; and " therefore, by *ſheol*, he could not mean the grave, " but *the receptacle of the dead.*" See, in the quotation from Taylor's Concordance hereafter, a good anſwer to this ſeemingly plauſible objection.--- " As this language is recorded by Moſes, he muſt " know that the Patriarchs did not conceive death " to import the utter extinction of the ſoul, and " therefore would not affix this meaning to it " himſelf. Nay,

" Thirdly, we know with certainty, that this " prophet himſelf believed the ſeparate ſubſiſtence " of the ſoul, and has even given it a divine ſanc- " tion: for he repreſents God, as making this pro- " miſe to Abraham, *Thou ſhalt go to thy fathers in* " *peace* †. Was it poſſible for him, then, to main-

" xxviii. 19. *To-morrow ſhalt thou* (Saul) *and thy ſons be with me*, " that is, in ſheol, or common receptacle of the dead. I can- " not forbear obſerving here, that there was a ſtriking reſem- " blance in many particulars between the *ſheol* of the Hebrews " and the *hades* of the Greeks. Under the general term *ſheol* " the Hebrews included both *paradiſe* and *gehenna*, as the Greeks " did *elyſium* and *tartarus* under *hades*."—The error of this will be ſhewn hereafter.

* Gen. xxxvii. 35.

† Gen. xv. 15.

" tain

" tain the *oppoſite* opinion?"—Query, What *oppoſite* opinion? Has it yet appeared that theſe words intend any thing more than has been ſuggeſted by the ſame ſort of language in the paſſages quoted above, viz. that Abraham ſhould live to a good old age, and at laſt die in peace? Why then inquire about the *poſſibility?* And how much in the mean time muſt Mr. Farmer have been diſtreſſed to find for his favourite notion a *divine ſanction*, and a *certainty* of the prophet's *belief* of it, ere he could be willing to hazard both by placing them upon ſo unreal a foundation *.---But to leave this for the preſent, as what may perhaps be better judged of hereafter, I would obſerve upon the quotation more at large the following particulars.

When Mr. Farmer refers us to Ezek. chap. xxxii. 22. I wiſh he had rather referred us to the whole context, from verſe 17th to the end, and alſo to another paſſage in Iſa. chap. xiv. the 4th verſe and following, which may be called perhaps the parent paſſage to this in Ezekiel; as there would then perhaps have appeared to be very little of real pertinency in the obſervation. For what can be plainer, than that in this latter paſſage, which was probably firſt written, the ſame king of Babylon,

* This caſe is the more obſervable, as the paſſage is ſo clearly explained by what follows; *Thou ſhalt go to thy fathers in peace,—thou ſhalt be buried in a good old age*; agreeable to a rule or idiom of the Old Teſtament, of making the latter member of the verſe a ſort of iteration or confirmation of the former, which ſeldom fails, and can ſcarcely be unknown to any reader.

who,

who, according to Ezekiel, had ſent Elam, Aſhur, Egypt, Meſhech, and Tubal, &c. that is, the princes of them, down into *hell*, *ſheol*, the *pit* or *grave*, call it what we will for the preſent, is here meant to be repreſented as being now under the ſame ſad neceſſity of deſcending thither himſelf, and to be in his turn as much inſulted by them, and triumphed over? And if the whole of this be only an imaginary repreſentation, though of the boldeſt and moſt beautiful kind, of the certain fall of this king of Babylon himſelf, after having been the cauſe of overthrow to ſo many others in his time, as probably Mr. Farmer would himſelf have acknowledged, on what principles can we aſſign to the other and ſimilar paſſages in Ezekiel any thing more than the like poetical and only figurative meaning?—And if not to theſe, then certainly not to this other of the like poetical kind in Job, chap. xxvi. 5; whether we chooſe, with the learned prelate, to underſtand it more generally of all ſuch men of renown and *chief ones*, once of the earth, as Iſaiah may be ſuppoſed to intend in verſe 9th; or with Mr. Farmer, more particularly, of the *giants who periſhed in the flood*; underſtanding thereby ſuch giants at large, and not the *ghoſts* of them, of which the text ſpeaks nothing, and which Mr. Farmer ſeems ſomewhat needleſsly, and without any juſt cauſe, to obtrude upon us.

But this other paſſage in 1 Sam. xxviii. 19; to which, perhaps, as containing ſomething of a kindred ſort, Deut. xviii. 9, 10, 11, 12. ſhould be

added; may ſuggeſt a more ſerious meaning. It is acknowledged to do ſo. But whether one more to Mr. Farmer's purpoſe may be queſtioned. For how is it to be made appear that there was amongſt theſe *pretenders* to necromancy and *real* dealers in impoſture any ſuch idea of a ſeparately ſubſiſting ſoul or principle as Mr. Farmer chooſes to ſuppoſe? or that if there were, (as there probably was not; indiſtinctneſs and confuſion of ideas, and the dark and ſombrous nature of them, being always more favourable to impoſitions of this ſort than their clearneſs and preciſion) that ſuch an idea was any more known to Moſes, and admitted into his ſyſtem, than the improper uſe attempted in all theſe caſes to be made of it? or, that Saul, for inſtance, in the whole of his application to the witch of Endor, was not, in principle and fact both, as much an apoſtate from the real ſyſtem of Moſes as if he had become polytheiſt or idolator? That the paſſage brings ſomething to out knowledge concerning the exiſtence of certain vain and evil arts among the ancient heathen nations, thoſe more eſpecially in the neighbourhood of the Iſraelites, in which theſe people were not to have any concern, I can readily grant; but nothing further; unleſs perhaps we may collect this from it, the want or deficiency of all regular and good proof of the point in diſpute, from any evidence or ſources purely patriarchal and Moſaical; which may be given perhaps as the reaſon, why Mr. Farmer is ſo willing to find ſomething of the kind amongſt perſons and practices ſo foreign

and

and diſreputable *. This however may ſuggeſt another, and as Mr. Farmer ſeems to have thought it, plauſible argument.---" Had Moſes," ſays this writer, " uſed it in this extenſive ſenſe [he means the term *death* as including the inſenſibility or extinction of the ſoul] " he would, as he well knew, " have been miſunderſtood by the Egyptians, who " aſſerted the immortality of the ſoul, [a point which it would not be eaſy to prove of theſe *ancient* Egyptians, otherwiſe than as the paſſage in Deut. xviii. may be thought to prove it, which it certainly does not ſufficiently for Mr. Farmer's purpoſe: [for any authority of Herodotus is here rather of the lateſt] and by the Hebrews who dwelt " amongſt them, and had adopted [a very ſtrange aſſertion!] " their ſyſtem of religion. He did not, " however, in order to prevent their miſtaking him, " give notice of uſing the word in a new and ſin- " gular ſenſe; and, therefore, he deſigned to ex- " preſs by it, what they did, the deſtruction of the " body only. As this is a point on which great " ſtreſs is laid by different contending parties," &c. &c.

Did then Mr. Farmer conceive of the five books of Moſes, as we now have them, as being then

* The ſtrength of the language in Deut. xviii. is in this view obſervable. " When thou art come into the land which " the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou ſhall not learn to do " after the *abominations* of thoſe nations. There ſhall not be " found among you any one, &c.—For all that do theſe " things are an *abomination* unto the LORD: and becauſe of " theſe *abominations*, the LORD thy God doth drive them " out."

written

written by Moſes, and publiſhed amongſt the Egyptians and read by them, ſomewhat like the productions of the modern preſs? This is not, I apprehend, the more general opinion of the learned on this ſubject, and would not, though granted, perhaps much avail him. For Moſes was not a follower, but an original teacher and leader; and upon a plan ſo eſſentially different from that of the Egyptians, and even oppoſite to it in the moſt important inſtances, that we cannot eaſily conceive of any ſuch neceſſity for the explication of terms, and of guarding againſt the corruption of the one by the other ſyſtem, as Mr. Farmer would ſuppoſe. Of his other aſſertion, that the ſyſtem of the one people had been adopted by the other, we can only ſay, that we recollect not any propoſition reſpecting which leſs can be ſaid for it, and more againſt it.

But allowing to this writer for the preſent ſuch a ſeparate ſubſiſtence of ſouls in *ſheol* and diſtribution of them there, as he ſo earneſtly pleads for, let us next conſider what all this in a religious view, and which muſt be ſuppoſed to have been Mr. Farmer's view in writing upon the ſubject, amounts to? Is it a diſtribution of the moral and judicial kind? and therefore of ſuch a kind as reaſon or revelation may be ſuppoſed to have ſought after or ſuggeſted, as of ſome importance to mankind? or is it only of ſuch a ſoothing, imaginary and ideal kind as has been before admitted, but does not ſeem of much pertinency to the preſent argument? I am miſtaken if we may not here obſerve in Mr. Farmer's repreſentation of the caſe, ſome conſiderable degree of deficiency

deficiency and of inconſiſtency. For firſt he tells us, *that in this place*, meaning ſheol, *perſons of the ſame nation, tribe, and family, and alſo thoſe who were united in the bands of friendſhip, aſſociated, and dwelt together;—and that in the diſtribution of them regard was had to the former relation* (that is, natural and civil relation of nation, tribe, family, &c.) *in which they ſtood to one another;* in other words, was an aſſociation of ſuch an imaginary and ſoothing kind as has been before granted: for it is certain that Mr. Farmer's words do import and will ſupport no more than this, however willing perhaps he might be that his reader ſhould aſſume more, and be, if he would, his own deceiver. Whereas in this other paſſage, quoted above, in which we are told *there was a ſtriking reſemblance in many particulars between the ſheol of the Hebrews and the hades of the Greeks, and that under the general term ſheol the Hebrews included both paradiſe and gehenna, as the Greeks did elyſium and tartarus under hades,* he certainly meant to affirm the aſſociation or diſtribution to be in the ſtricteſt ſenſe moral or judicial. Here then I willingly join iſſue with this writer, and would recommend it to the reader to compare in this view the accounts which are given us by Homer * and Virgil † of the hades of the Greeks, with the following very clear and judicious arrangement, as ſeems to me, of the paſſages in the

* Odyſſey, Book xi.

† Æneid, Book vi.

Hebrew Bible which mention ſheol, and then to form his own opinion; which cannot, I think, fail to be this, that the ſingle circumſtance excepted, that both were ſuppoſed to be under the earth, there was ſcarcely between them any other common property.

"SHEOL," ſays Doctor Taylor, in his *Hebrew Concordance, adapted to the Engliſh Bible*,---"*Sepulchrum.* The under-ground parts of the "earth; otherwiſe called the *nether* or *lower parts* "*of the earth*, the earth beneath, in oppoſition to "the *earth above*, where man and other animals "live. In *Sheol* are the foundations of the moun-"tains, *Deut.* xxxii. 22. Into *Sheol* men penetrate "by digging into the earth, *Amos*, ix. 2. Into "*Sheol* the roots of trees do ſtrike down; which "are ſaid to have been comforted, or revived, (as "with manure) when God caſt down the Aſſyrians "to hell, or *ſheol*, *Ezek.* xxxi. 16. Into *ſheol*, Korah, "Dathan, and Abiram went down alive, when the "earth opened and ſwallowed them up, *Numb.* xvi. "30, 33. Jonah was in the belly, or midſt, of *ſheol*, not "as he was in the belly of the whale; but as he was "carried by the whale into the midſt or depths of "the ſea, *Jonah* ii. 2, 3. In *ſheol* the body is cor-"rupted, and conſumed by worms, *Job* xvii. 13, "14. Pſalm xlix. 14. *Iſa.* xiv. 11. They that reſt "together in the *duſt*, are ſaid to go down *to the* "*bars*, or ſtrong gates of *ſheol*, *Job* xvii. 16. In "*ſheol* there is no knowledge, nor can any praiſe "God, or give him thanks there, *Pſal.* vi. 5. *Eccl.* "ix. 10. *Iſa.* xxxviii. 10, 11. *ſheol* and the *pit*, "*death*, *corruption*, are ſynonimous, *Pſal.* xvi.

"10. *Pſal.*

" 10. *Pſal.* lxxxix. 48. *Prov.* i. 12. *Prov.* vii. 27.
" *Iſa.* xiv. 15. *Iſa.* xxviii. 15, 18. *Ezek.* xxxi. 16.
" *Hoſ.* xiii. 14. A *grave* is one particular cavity,
" purpoſely digged for the interment of a dead
" perſon: *ſheol* is a collective name for all the
" graves, and all the parts and recepticles of the
" earth and ſea, which are below the ſurface of the
" one, or at the bottom of the other. He that
" is in a *grave* is in *ſheol*; but he that is in *ſheol*
" may not be in a grave, but in any pit, or in the
" ſea. In ſhort, it is the region of the dead;
" which is figuratively conſidered as a city or
" large habitation, with gates and bars, in which
" there are many chambers, *Prov.* vii. 27. And
" they who are there are repreſented as the inha-
" bitants: who, by a very bold, but beautiful
" and ſtriking *Proſopopœia*, are introduced as
" greatly ſurpriſed, when the great king of Baby-
" lon was dead, and came amongſt them, *Iſa.* xiv.
" 9, 10, 11. *The loweſt hell* (ſheol beneath) *Pſal.*
" lxxxvi. 13, may ſignify no more than *ſheol from*
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" *Prov.* xv. 24, which is ſometimes the ſenſe of
" death alſo. The *pains* or *ſorrows of hell*, (ſheol)
" are deadly pains, which have a tendency to
" bring a man to ſheol, 2 *Sam.* xxii. 6. *Sheol*
" may be ſo called [having a near affinity to *ſhaal*,
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" tiability of the grave, which is never full, but is,

" as it were, always aſking or craving more, *Prov.* " xxvii. 20. Hab. ii. 5."

Let this be a true repreſentation, and what appearances are there of ſuch a diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments in ſheol as the purpoſes of religion require, and as might, were the ſtate and diſtribution of things and perſons there any thing more than poetical and ideal only, be expected? I ſhall therefore conclude, that they are ſuch only. Neither does it ſeem to me that any ſuch ſeparate ſubſiſtance of ſouls, as Mr. Farmer and ſome others plead for, lay at the foundation of theſe ideal and imaginary repreſentations, was the ground of them, or can by fair conſtruction be deduced from them. A modern ſcholar indeed may wonder that theſe ancient Hebrews, having given to the dead, after being laid in their lowly graves or more ſplendid ſepulchres, animation, language, thought, and ſuch other of their former paſſions, habits, and affections as the preſent caſe required, ſhould not have proceeded only one ſingle ſtep further, and by another, and perhaps ſomewhat bolder effort of the mind, have liberated the ſpiritual and merely immaterial principle from all connection with corporeity and matter whatſoever; but it appears in fact that they did not do ſo;---whether for the reaſon which the following paſſage may ſuggeſt, or ſome other, may be worth conſidering;

" In order to determine this," ſays Bp. Law,--- he means how Chriſt delivers from death, as mentioned in Heb. ii. 14, 15.—" it will be neceſſary " to attend to the true meaning of the word *death*,

" as

" as it is ſtrictly and properly applied in Scrip-
" ture: and this may be beſt ſeen, by looking
" back to the remarkable paſſage where it is firſt
" uſed, in that denunciation which brought *Adam*
" and his poſterity under it; and where we muſt
" ſuppoſe it uſed in all the plainneſs, and propriety
" of ſpeech imaginable.—Which one would think
" ſufficiently explained in the ſentence paſſed on
" our firſt parents; where they are reminded of
" their original, and of that ſtate to which this
" change ſhould reduce them. *In the ſweat of thy*
" *face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto*
" *the ground; for out of it waſt thou taken: duſt*
" *thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return.* Now
" what do we imagine they could poſſibly under-
" ſtand by this, but a reſumption of that natural
" *life* or conſcious *being*, which their Creator had
" been lately pleaſed to beſtow upon them? the
" forfeiting which muſt neceſſarily include a total
" loſs of all thoſe benefits, that then did, or ever
" could proceed from him. This ſurely, and no-
" thing leſs, muſt be implied in that ſolemn ſen-
" tence: nor can we well conceive the unhappy
" ſubjects of it to have been at that time ſo very
" ingenious as to explain it all away, by diſtin-
" guiſhing upon the different parts of their conſti-
" tution; and ſo concluding, that by death no more
" was intended, than only *living* in ſome different
" *manner;* or a continuation of their conſciouſ-
" neſs, and real exiſtence, in ſome other *place*.
" No: that was the philoſophy of after ages: con-

" cerning which, all I ſhall ſay at preſent is, that " ſome of its moſt eminent patrons cannot help " obſerving, that they *don't find it in the Scrip-* " *tures* *. Theſe, in their obvious meaning, re- " preſent the whole of the man, individual perſon, " or being; as included in the ſentence addreſſed " to him; nor do they ſeem to take notice of any " other circumſtance in the caſe, beſide that, ſo " often mentioned, of his returning to the *duſt*, or " *ground, from whence he was taken:* and might " not the firſt pair as well expect, that the ſame " *breath of life, which the Lord God had breathed* " *into their noſtrils*; whereby *man became a living* " *ſoul*; ſhould ſtill ſurvive the execution of that " ſentence; or that the *duſt* itſelf ſhould *praiſe* " *God*; as that any kind of knowledge of, or " communication with him, ſhould continue in " that ſtate of darkneſs, and deſtruction, to which " they were then doomed?" Conſiderations on the Theory of Religion, Edition 5. p. 345. 6.

Here the reader ſees the very different opinion of one of the leaders of thoſe different contending parties, upon the meaning of the word *death*, which Mr. Farmer ſpeaks of; and a better expoſition of it than his own, in my opinion.

It may be right howewer to hear one other writer, a biſhop too, and he of no common character and note. I mean Dr. Lowth, who, having, in his ſeventh Prelection upon the Hebrew poetry,

* Tillotſon, Vol. II. fol. Sermon 100.

quoted in another view ſome of the paſſages above conſidered, ſpeaks upon them to this purpoſe, "not becauſe thoſe ancient Hebrews did not believe in the ſoul's immortality, as Le Clerc and ſome others chooſe to ſuppoſe, but for this reaſon only, that they had not yet attained to ſuch refinement of thought and language as to expreſs in the moſt proper terms ſuch ſpiritual ideas and abſtractions. ---The conſequence of which was, that ſeeing the body to be laid in the ſepulchre, and left there, a very low notion became popular amongſt them, that the ſtate or being of the deceaſed there was of much the ſame kind as had been had or enjoyed on the earth formerly."---*Non eo quod permanere poſt mortem animos non crederent*, &c.---So this good prelate; to whom, I apprehend, this anſwer may be given, that as the Moſaic ſyſtem ſeems not to have taught, ſo neither did the thoughts of the ancient Hebrews go ſo far as to the ſoul's immateriality and immortality. Their manner of thinking ſeems to have been otherwiſe. The dead being laid in their graves, they aſcribed to them there (no matter now how conſiſtently or philoſophically) the powers of ſpeech, recollection, ſociability and converſe, but ſeem never to have proceeded any further; and, as at firſt they did not begin with, ſo neither in the ſequel did they ever proceed ſo far, as to ſeparate the ſoul or thinking principle from the material one, and ſo attain to the ſpiritual and ſublime principle, as ſome may think it, of the ſoul's immateriality and immortality. Of theſe different notions

which of the two may ſeem to be moſt favourable to the intereſts of religion and virtue, is not now the writer's buſineſs to inquire; it is with him a matter of criticiſm only; upon which, in caſe he has erred, may others be more happy; they will not be more ſincere, in forming an opinion.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

Of divers Paſſages in the other Evangeliſts; in St. John's Goſpel more particularly.——That the Jews in thoſe days were not without the notion of a Reſurrection;——The grounds of this enquired after.

IN the Goſpel according to St. Mark, I obſerve nothing which is uſually conſidered as of any particular importance to be brought forward upon this ſubject; neither in St. Luke's Goſpel are certain paſſages, which have been not unfrequently mentioned in this view, of equal importance, as I conceive, with ſome others in St. John, however improper it may be not to take, in this connection, ſome notice of them. In chap. xiv. for inſtance, verſe 1ſt, it is ſaid, *And it came to paſs, as he went into the houſe of one of the chief phariſees to eat bread on the ſabbath day, that they watched him.*---Verſe 7th, *And he put forth a parable to thoſe which were bidden, when he marked how they choſe out the chief rooms, ſaying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, ſit not down in the higheſt room,* &c.---Ver. 12th, *Then ſaid he alſo to him that bade him, When thou makeſt a dinner or a ſupper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy rich neighbours; leſt they alſo bid thee again, and a recompenſe be made thee. But when thou*

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makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And thou ſhalt be bleſſed: for they cannot recompenſe thee: for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the juſt. I am miſtaken if we may not from hence infer, not only that there was certainly amongſt the Phariſees ſuch a notion and allowance of the Reſurrection of the dead as we have already ſeen to have been aſcribed to them by St. Paul, in more than one place in the Acts; but that this alſo was well known to Jeſus, and a point mutually underſtood and agreed upon as it were by all the parties; as we cannot eaſily ſuppoſe that Jeſus would have now hazarded for the firſt time, and upon an occaſion ſo familiar as this ſeems to have been, any thing particularly new and ſtrange; and the rather, as we do not perceive in the reading, that what he did ſay was received by them with any degree of ſurpriſe, or otherwiſe than as matter of common knowledge and concern.

Of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in chap. xvith, I know not whether what I ſhall obſerve will ſeem to all perſons equally admiſſible. It may ſeem to have ſome relation to, but does not ſurely do much to aſcertain, the proper Chriſtian doctrine of the Reſurrection. The rich man does indeed lift up his eyes in hell, or hades; and, as the parable may ſeem to repreſent, immediately after his death; ſeeing Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom: But I doubt, what is ſaid of the eyes, tongue, and finger conſidered; whether he can be conceived of as being in a ſeparate or

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diſembodied ſtate notwithſtanding; neither are what we further read of the gulf between, of the view which each of the parties has of the other, and of the converſation between them, very agreeable to this or indeed to any other ſyſtem. So that if we ſhould wholly lay aſide all conſideration of the repreſentations made in this parable, in an argument ſo critical as the preſent, and rather chooſe to ſuppoſe it to have been conſtructed upon certain notions or principles which were then popular, and with the view only or chiefly to impreſs the imagination, for which it is admirably fitted; I know not whether we ſhall not take the better courſe *.---Neither am I certain, that from the

* That the New Teſtament, though written in Greek, is full of Hebrew idioms, and muſt be explained rather by what we read in the Old Teſtament than by what occurs in the pureſt claſſic authors, has been often obſerved by learned writers. Of this I would aſk whether we have not an obſervable inſtance in this parable? of the Græcian term *hades*, I mean taken in a Hebrew ſenſe, and anſwering to the *ſheol* of the Old Teſtament? It is no objection to this that the rich man lifts up his eyes in hades, and ſeeth, &c; for ſo did the king of Babylon in ſheol, and there ſee and *ſuffer* all that we have before ſeen in Iſaiah xiv. The powers of parable may be ſuppoſed equal to thoſe of poetry in this caſe, and the authority of Jeſus by no means inferior to that of Iſaiah upon ſuch an occaſion. And I am miſtaken if the word will not be found to be taken in the ſame ſenſe in all the other paſſages in which it occurs. It is certainly the ſame as ſheol in Acts ii. 27, 31; and in 1 Cor. xv. 55. where it is rendered the grave with the utmoſt propriety. And why in the explication of Matt. xvi. 18. ſhould we ſeek for any other meaning than the utmoſt force and power of death and of deſtrnction, when in reſpect of ſheol

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the well known words of Jeſus in chap. xxiii. 43. we can draw a more deciſive argument. For firſt, how is it to be aſcertained, that Jeſus himſelf did that day go into paradiſe, if by this term is to be underſtood a ſtate of poſitive conſciouſneſs and happineſs? This, I think, has not been the more uſual opinion of the church; is leaſt of all conformable to ſuch notions of the death of Chriſt as ſome chooſe to reckon the moſt orthodox; and is upon no principles perhaps tenable; and if it were, ſhould not, I apprehend, determine and fix our

we have already had the ſame language before us? ſee the quotation from Taylor before, and again the paſſages, Iſaiah xxxviii. 10. Pſ. ix. 13. Job. xvii. 16, &c.—Matt. xi. 23. *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven,* as it were, *ſhall be brought down to hades,* from a very high ſtate to a very low one; to the grave, ruin, or deſtruction; as we have before ſeen ſheol, or the grave, ſometimes to ſignify; ſee the ſame quotation. And ſo no doubt is the meaning of hades in Rev. vi. 8; as what follows concerning the ſword and famine, &c. ſufficiently proves—To thoſe who ſhall conſider Acts ii. 24. John xi. 25. Rom. xiv. 9. the keys in Rev. i. 18. will not perhaps want any further explication.—In chap. xx. 13. it ſeems to be tranſlated *grave* in the margin with much propriety; after which, the judgement being ſuppoſed over, in order to which that ſurrender up of the dead both by the ſea and land was only preparatory, what we next read in ver. 14, is very remarkable, *And death and hades were caſt into the lake of fire.* As if, the judgement of mankind being now over, there needed death and the grave no longer.

It is remarkable, that in all the places where the future puniſhment of the wicked is meant to be regularly, and not as in this parable in a ſcenical way only ſpoken of, *gehenna,* and not *hades,* is the term made uſe of. See Matt. v. 22. chap. xxiii. 33. Mark. ix. 43, 45, 47. Luke xii. 5. James iii. 6. &c. &c.

ideas

ideas concerning the ſtate of the dead univerſally. For under all the circumſtances of this extraordinary caſe and time, who ſhall prove, that the paſſage of this penitent thief with Jeſus into paradiſe, upon that ſame day in which he died, was not as much a matter of peculiar and eſpecial grace and diſpenſation, as the tranſlations formerly of Enoch and Elijah, and no more to be argued from and drawn into example? So I conceive we might very reaſonably argue, were the fact, in reſpect to Jeſus himſelf, not to be doubted; which however I do doubt, or rather diſbelieve, for the reaſons above given; and ſhall therefore ſuppoſe, for the preſent at leaſt, that from the words under conſideration the only ſure inference is, the certainty of this penitent perſon's ſalvation in the view of Jeſus, as much and as aſſuredly ſo, as if he had been then immediately inveſted with it *; as indeed in one ſenſe he may be ſaid to have been, if the preſent was the only day he ſhould ever ſee and know, till poſſeſſed of it.

So indeciſive do theſe paſſages in St. Luke ſeem to be upon the ſubject, though not ſo totally irrelative to it as to juſtify us in taking no notice of them whatſoever; and of conſequence by no means proper to be made the ground or baſis of any judgement upon it, till certain others of a much more dignified and higher kind, which occur in the goſpel of St. John, have been conſidered. There, in chap. v. and upon an occaſion which has been ſomewhat largely ſtated in the foregoing verſes,

* This is a paſſage in Deuteronomy, chap. ix. 1. very much confirms.

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our Saviour is repreſented, in the 20th, &c. as ſpeaking to ſome, who were probably Phariſees, in the manner following. *For the Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him*, or empowereth him to do (---for I am not able to conceive what elſe can be the meaning) *all things that himſelf doeth, and he will ſhew him*, or enable him to do, *greater works than theſe*, (than the healing of ſuch ſick and impotent folk as thoſe mentioned in the third verſe and following) *that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will*; is empowered to do ſo when he ſees it to be proper. *Neither* again, and further to illuſtrate this matter, *doth the Father judge any one*; *but hath committed*, hath ſo given or committed, *all judgement to the Son: That all men ſhould* now *honour the Son, even*, that is, for the ſame reaſon, and upon the ſame general ground, *as they honour the Father*.---The idea ſeems to be, that ſuch high powers of *raiſing* and of *judging* could not be conceived of as aught leſs than divine, and muſt therefore, wherever found, be acknowleged to be ſuch accordingly. Which is what the next paſſage further teaches;--- *He that*, under theſe circumſtance, *honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him*; but does rather diſhonour him, and theſe his peculiarly excluſive and high powers of raiſing and judging, in his delegate and repreſentative. And this is what I wiſh you to conſider; the importance of the caſe, and your own intereſt in it, require it of you. For, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come*

into

into condemnation; but is paſſed from death unto life. In proof and illuſtration of which, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you* further, *The hour is coming, and now is* in part, *when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear ſhall live:* referring to the caſes of the widow of Nain's ſon, and of the daughter of Jairus, &c. as is commonly ſuppoſed. *For as the Father hath life in himſelf,* or is the original and firſt ſource of it; *ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf,* or to be another and ſecondary ſource of it. *And hath given him authority to execute judgement alſo,* (as was before mentioned in verſe 22d) *becauſe he is the Son of man*; is willing, though the Son of God, to be ſo ſeen and treated *.

Marvel

* So I chooſe to explain this paſſage, and not by ſuppoſing any reference in it to Dan. vii. 13. for theſe reaſons; Firſt, if Son of man means Jeſus in his higheſt capacity, and is equivalent to Chriſt or Meſſiah (as they who ſuppoſe a reference to Daniel uſually explain) what then does Son of God, as diſtinct from it, ſignify? Is it not obvious to every one reading the goſpels that Son of man and Son of God were meant to ſuggeſt ſomewhat different ideas? and if ſo, muſt not the one moſt probably mean Jeſus in his loweſt, and the other the ſame Jeſus moſt probably in his higheſt capacity? Secondly, has not Jeſus himſelf ſettled this point in the paſſage following, Matt. xvi. 13, &c.? *When Jeſus came into the coaſts of Cæſarea Philippi, he aſked his diſciples, ſaying, Whom do men ſay, that I, the Son of man, am?* That I am a man, like any other man (ſee Numb. xxiii. 19. Job. xxv. 6. Pſ. viii. 4. &c.) is obvious; but do they begin to ſee and acknowledge in me any thing more than this, any other and higher character? *And they ſaid, Some ſay that thou art John the Baptiſt, ſome Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the old prophets. He ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? And Simon Peter anſwered and ſaid, Thou art the Chriſt,*

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Marvel not at this,---at my ſaying, "that the "hour is coming, and now is, when the dead," ſome few of them, "ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God," &c;---*For the hour is coming, in*

the Son of the living God. Is not this deciſive? Some I know, to avoid the clearneſs of this deciſion, would willingly tranſlate, *Whom do men ſay that I am? the Son of man?* But beſides the aukwardneſs of this, what becomes of the peculiar ſpirit and preciſion and propriety of St. Peter's anſwer upon this hypotheſis? as well as of all that follows? *And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*—*Then*, or upon this, ver. 20th, *charged he his diſciples that they ſhould tell no man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt.* But why not, if Son of man mean the ſame thing, and he in this way was avowing it daily? Compare John xii. 34. in further illuſtration. In the ſame view, or as tending to remove what may perhaps ſeem objectionable, I add what follows, Matt xxvi. 63. *But Jeſus held his peace. And the high prieſt anſwered and ſaid unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Chriſt, the Son of God? Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thou haſt ſaid. Nevertheleſs I ſay unto you, Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of man*, him whom ye do not ſeem willing to acknowlege under any other and higher character, *ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* Which laſt expreſſion does not ſeem to me to have any retroſpective reference to the paſſage in Daniel, but to look forward rather to a different ſubject and event, the end of the world, and the then coming of Jeſus; ſee in this view, Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. chap. xxv. 31. Rev. 1. 6. And this the parallel paſſage in St. Luke confirms; who ſeeming not to have carried his thoughts upon this occaſion ſo far as St. Matthew and St. Mark, but to the exaltation of Chriſt in heaven only, has very properly omitted the expreſſion; ſee in St. Luke, chap. xxii. 69.—In the following beautiful and expreſſive paſſage in Mark, chap. ii. 10; *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (he* then *ſaith to the ſick of the palſy,—)* more than concerns this ſubject only ſeems to me obſervable.

which

which all that are in the graves, and not, as now, a few only, *ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth: They that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.* Here the manner in which Jeſus ſpeaks of the Reſurrection of the dead, as having reſpect to their whole and complete perſons, without ſuppoſing any dividuation or diſtinction of component parts, is worth obſerving; as alſo is the univerſality of it, as here taught by him, and its taking in of all mankind both good and bad; and the awful and judicial conſequences of it with reſpect to life, or otherwiſe, as the characters of men will be then found to be: particulars which were either not mentioned, or however not ſo explicitly, in the argument which has been before us already, betwixt Jeſus and the Sadducees. I might alſo ſubjoin ſome few other remarks did they not refer to another ſubject *.

Upon

* Few of the paſſages which are uſually brought forward in the controverſy concerning the perſon of Chriſt, have appeared to me to be more deſerving of attention than this in St. John's goſpel; in which there is nothing of the vehement and almoſt perturbed manner of St. Paul, (in which expreſſion I refer to the involutions ſometimes of his ſtyle, and to the myſteriouſneſs ſometimes of his thoughts, almoſt equally) nor yet any difficulty ariſing from the variations or uncertainty of manuſcripts and verſions; but in which we hear Jeſus himſelf ſpeaking upon the ſubject with calmneſs and ſimplicity. The Jews, it ſeems, becauſe Jeſus had vindicated himſelf in the healing of a ſick man upon the ſabbath day by the example of God his Father, (ſee verſe 17th) took offence hereupon and ſaid, that this was in effect making himſelf *equal* with God, or, in

Upon the ſolemnity of our Saviour's language in chap. vi. 39, 40, and the mention which is there made

other words, claiming ſuch a peculiar kind of ſonſhip to him as, if allowed, would ſeem to be a juſtification of him in the affecting to do almoſt every thing elſe that God did, and in the aſſuming to himſelf of almoſt all, if not every one of the divine prerogatives. Such ſeems to be the nature of the objection in the 18th verſe. How then does Jeſus reply to it in the 19th verſe and following? Not, we may obſerve, by denying ſuch a conſequence altogether, and ſuch a *peculiar* kind of ſonſhip (different from that of men and angels) as had given, being aſſerted, occaſion to it; but only by ſo explaining the nature of it as to ſhew, that there was nothing, when it was rightly underſtood, incompatible with the ſupremacy of the Father in it: for, "that the Son could do nothing of him-"ſelf;"—"that the Father had given him to have life in "himſelf;"—and "ſheweth him all things that himſelf "doeth," &c.—All which being admitted, I do not ſee, for my own part, how that equality of the Son with the Father, which ſome contend for, can be maintained on the one hand; nor how on the other, the high characters and powers which are mentioned in ver. 21, 22, 23. being adverted to, we are juſtified in taking away, as ſome now affect to do, every kind and degree of religious worſhip, homage, veneration, or reſpect (call it what we will) from the character, authority, and lordſhip of Jeſus; nor again, how ſuch reverential and religious regards, when this is underſtood to be the baſis and ground of them, is any real objection to the doctrine of the Divine Unity, or need to divide and perplex the mind of the Chriſtian worſhipper. I know indeed a paſſage which ſome perhaps may think ſtrong againſt me in this argument; Iſaiah xl. 8. "I am the LORD, that is my name, and my glory will I not "give to another, *neither my praiſe to graven images.*" In which paſſage it cannot ſurely eſcape the notice of every reader how, according to the Hebrew manner and idiom, the laſt member of the text explains and limits the former, and ſhews what other is intended. But it ſtill remains true, that the Father Almighty

made of *the laſt* or a laſt day, it might be proper to obſerve, were it not for the recurrence of the ſame idea with ſome further enlargement upon it in the eleventh chapter, to which I therefore proceed. It is there ſaid in the fifth and ſixth verſes, *Now Jeſus loved Martha, and her ſiſter, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was ſick, he abode two days ſtill in the ſame place where he was.* The ſtory of his death is then given, after which the evangeliſt proceeds; *And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as ſoon as ſhe heard that Jeſus was coming, went and met him: but Mary ſat ſtill in the houſe. Then ſaid Martha unto Jeſus, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatſoever thou ſhalt aſk of God, God will give it thee.* A remarkable paſſage, as containing a tacit but full acknowledgement of that Divine power in and with Jeſus, which is the ſubject of the fifth chapter, and alſo ſignification of her deſire, expreſſed with much reſpect and tenderneſs, that it might be employed upon this occaſion. To which our Saviour's anſwer, addreſſed rather to her ſecret thoughts than language, is not leſs remarkable. *Jeſus ſaith unto her, Thy brother ſhall riſe again. Martha ſaith unto him, I know that he ſhall riſe again in the Reſurrection at the laſt day. Jeſus ſaith unto her,*

Almighty hath given to his Son Jeſus ſuch honour and glory as is mentioned in ver 21, &c; to which may be added, Matt. xxviii. 19. Heb. i. 6; and perhaps ſome other places.

I am the Reſurrection and the life, and can even now raiſe him if I pleaſe, without deferring till that time: *he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live*, that is, again, and even now, if I pleaſe; *and whoſoever liveth*, is now alive, *and believeth in me, ſhall not die for ever* *, though he muſt do ſo for a time, in order that the reality in their effects both of ſin and death may be ſeen in him as well as in others †;—*Believeſt thou this?* in this my particular and official character and agency in the Reſurrection of the dead, as well as in the general notion or doctrine? *She ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, that ſhould come into the world*; and believing this, am prepared to receive as true whatever elſe thou ſhalt teach me.---Such ſeems to me to be the meaning of the paſſage, and the concluſions from it to be very obvious; viz. firſt, that in theſe notions of a Reſurrection and a laſt day, as here generally mentioned, there was

* So the ſame Greek phraſe is tranſlated in chap. vi. 51, 58, where life is ſpoken of.

† Admitting this to be the meaning, I would aſk, Whether it does not ſuggeſt a very proper anſwer to the queſtion which ſome have propoſed as of no ſmall difficulty, viz. "Whence it "comes to paſs that believers in Chriſt die at all, if it be "really true that he has redeemed them from it?" A queſtion, it ſeems, which Mr. Aſgill, a writer of the laſt century, determined in the negative.—See the account of his book entituled, *An Argument, proving, That according to the covenant of Eternal Life revealed in the Scriptures, man may be tranſlated from hence into that Eternal Life, without paſſing through Death*,—in the Biographia, Dr. Kippis's edition.

nothing

nothing which was ſtrange or new, either to Martha or her friends; who ſpeaks of them with the utmoſt freedom, and may be obſerved to have firſt of all mentioned them; but that ſecondly, in this other notion or poſition, that Jeſus was himſelf the Reſurrection and the life, or was to be, under God, the official agent and miniſter of them, there did ſeem, in the apprehenſion of Jeſus, to be ſomething which might poſſibly ſeem to Martha and her friends not only new but objectionable. This the queſtion, *Believeſt thou this*, which plainly refers to this laſt notion only, evidently implies; and the ſame thing is confirmed by many particulars which have been already before us.

But if ſuch was at this time the caſe, how is it to be explained and accounted for? Have we been totally miſtaken in the argument in the preceding chapter concerning the knowledge of the ancient Jews and Patriarchs upon this ſubject? Or does there remain ſome other way of accounting for ſuch ideas upon it, as ſeem to have been at leaſt prevalent in the days of Jeſus? As this ſeems to me to be the truer anſwer, I crave leave to ſuggeſt the following things in illuſtration.

Says the writer to the Hebrews, chap. xi. 8th and following verſes, *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe. For he looked for a city*

which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God.---Ver. 13th, *Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of them, and embraced them; and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that ſay ſuch things, declare plainly that they ſeek a country. And truely if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they deſire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God; for he hath provided for them a city;* ſuch a one as above mentioned, having foundations, and a heavenly. ---Here, I conceive, much more is ſuppoſed than the reader will be able to find in the book of Geneſis, in which the call of Abraham, and the ſojournings of himſelf and of Iſaac and Jacob are related; unleſs he ſhall be pleaſed to aſſume in the reading that principle of Cabbaliſm, allegory, or ſpiritual and recondite meaning, call it what we will, which ſeems to have been now popular and prevalent amongſt ſome of the Jews; and which it cannot, I think, be denied that the writers of the New Teſtament had in ſome degree, and St. Paul and the author of this Epiſtle had, in no ſmall degree adopted. And if ſo, why may we not ſuppoſe that ſomething of the like proceeding may have been applied to ſome other paſſages in the Old Teſtament, which may ſeem to have been full as promiſing in their appearance, and as proper for

it;

it; and of courſe a ſenſe given to them more ſublime, recondite and ſpiritual than might at firſt have been intended? Such paſſages, I mean, as Job xix. 25, 26, 27. Pſal. xvi. ult. Dan. xii. 2; which have been before us already;——and again theſe others in Pſal. xxii. 15. lxxi. 20. lxxxviii. 5, 6. cxli. 7; and again in Iſa. xxvi. 14, 19. Ezek. xxxvii. 12, 13, 14. Hoſ. vi. 2. xiii. 14; in the former of which the low ſtate of the Pſalmiſt's own private and perſonal affairs, and in the latter thoſe of the Jewiſh church and nation, are ſuppoſed, by the images of death and a Reſurrection from it, to be repreſented.

But to ſome it has ſeemed, as if even images of this kind could not have been in uſe, unleſs the Reſurrection of the dead, in the moſt literal ſenſe, had been before admitted, and ſerved them as a baſis. So in particular ſeems to have thought a writer of eminence, whoſe tranſlation of one of the paſſages above, and his note upon it, are theſe following:

" Thy dead ſhall live; my deceaſed they ſhall riſe;
" Awake, and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt!
" For thy dew is the dew of the dawn;
" But the earth ſhall caſt forth, as an abortion, the deceaſed tyrants!"

——" The deliverance of the people of God " from a ſtate of the loweſt depreſſion, is ex- " plained by images plainly taken from the Re- " ſurrection of the dead. In the ſame manner " the prophet Ezekiel repreſents the reſtoration

" of the Jewiſh nation from a ſtate of utter diſ-
" ſolution by the reſtoring of the dry bones to life,
" exhibited to him in a viſion, chap. xxxvii.
" which is directly thus applied and explained, ver.
" 11--13. And this deliverance is expreſſed with a
" manifeſt oppoſition to what is here ſaid above,
" ver. 14, of the great lords and tyrants under
" whom they had groaned;

" They are dead, they ſhall not live;
" They are deceaſed tyrants, they ſhall not riſe:

" that they ſhould be deſtroyed utterly, and ſhould
" never be reſtored to their former power and
" glory. It appears from hence, that the doctrine
" of the Reſurrection of the dead was at that
" time a popular and common doctrine: for an
" image which is aſſumed in order to expreſs or
" repreſent any thing in the way of allegory or
" metaphor, whether poetical or prophetical, muſt
" be an image commonly known and underſtood;
" otherwiſe it will not anſwer the purpoſe for
" which it is aſſumed *."

Here I would aſk, whether the biſhop, even upon his own ſyſtem, has not rather ſhot beyond the mark in affirming, that the *doctrine* of the Reſurrection of the dead was at that time when Iſaiah lived, " in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, " Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," (ſee chap. i. 1.) a *popular* and *common doctrine*? as even they who are willing to admit ſomething more

* Bp. Lowthe's Iſaiah, chap. xxvi. 19.

of

of this ſort in the Old Teſtament than has been above granted, do ſeldom however dignify with the name of *doctrine* any ſuch ſuppoſed notices or indications? neither does the learned prelate tell us, or here at leaſt attempt to conjecture, who had been the *revealer*, which ſhould not however be unknown, of ſuch a *doctrine*. He only ſays, "It appears from hence;" that is, from the imagery or metaphorical language which Iſaiah uſes. But, with due reſpect to ſo great a critic, may not imagery and metaphor be ſometimes ideal only? and of ſuch a ſort as that we cannot always, from the images made uſe of, infer or prove the actual exiſtence of the things ſpoken of? This I think muſt be acknowledged concerning that very inſtance of imagery to which he himſelf has referred in Ezekiel xxxvii. 1---14; and ſo I alſo think muſt be granted of ſuch other imagery as we meet with in Lev. xxvi. 19. Joel ii. 31. (which we may obſerve in paſſing is not peculiar to the Scriptures *) Iſaiah xlix. 15. lxvi. ult. Jer. xiii. 23. xxxii. 20, and perhaps ſome other places. So far does it ſeem to be from the utmoſt critical exactneſs, to ſay, however for once this great ſcholar and good judge

* *Fiat juſtitia, ruat cælum*, ſays the Latin adage; "Let juſtice be done, and the ſky fall upon us." And to like purpoſe Horace, ſpeaking of the virtuous man,

Si fractus illabatur orbis, &c.

"Though the whole frame of nature round him break,

* * *

He unconcern'd would hear,——

* * *

And ſtand ſecure amidſt a falling world."

Od. iii. 3.

in

in things of this ſort may have ſaid it, that "an "image which is aſſumed in order to expreſs or "repreſent any thing in the way of allegory or "metaphor, whether poetical or prophetical, muſt "be an image commonly known and underſtood;" if by being known and underſtood any thing more be meant than its being of ſuch a ſort as the mind may have ſome idea or conception of, and be thereby aſſiſted in the ſtronger feeling and impreſſion of ſuch other ideas and notions, of a more abſtract perhaps and latent nature, as the writer, whether poet or prophet, wiſhes to ſuggeſt.

So at leaſt I have been wont to reaſon with myſelf, in endeavouring to trace to its head or ſource the Jewiſh *idea* or notion, but not yet Chriſtian *doctrine* *, of the Reſurrection of the dead; from whence this other notion of a *laſt day*, or day of judgement (the Reſurrection being ſuppoſed a general one) would ſeem to follow as a ſort

* "Had Jeſus Chriſt," ſays Mr. Paley, "delivered no other "declaration than the following: *The hour is coming in which* "*all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come* "*forth; they that have done good unto the Reſurrection of life, and* "*they that have done evil, unto the Reſurrection of damnation*; he "had pronounced a meſſage of ineſtimable importance,—a "meſſage, in which the wiſeſt of mankind would rejoice to "find an anſwer to their doubts, and reſt to their inquiries. "It is idle to ſay, that a future ſtate had been diſcovered "already: it had been diſcovered, as the *Copernican ſyſtem* "was; it was one gueſs among many. He alone diſcovers, "who *proves*; and no man can prove this point, but the "teacher who teſtifies by miracles that his doctrine comes "from God."—Principles of Philoſophy, Vol. II. p. 109. ed. 4th.

of corollary; and more eſpecially to ſuch as, like the Jews, were often reading of ſome day of the Lord, or of God, or other; that is, of ſome great providential day; in their own Scriptures. Beſides which, however, I have to quote, from an eminently learned and orthodox writer, a paſſage containing the fulleſt proof that this alſo was in the days of Jeſus a very popular and common notion. The reader will obſerve I ſpeak of the fact, not its origin, and of the notion at preſent as a Jewiſh notion only.

"The mother-text of Scripture whence the "church of the Jews grounded the name and ex- "pectation of *the great day of judgment*, with "the circumſtances thereto belonging, and where- "unto almoſt all the deſcriptions and expreſſions "thereof in the New Teſtament have reference, is "that viſion in the ſeventh of Daniel, of a ſeſſion "of judgment when the fourth beaſt came to be "deſtroyed: Where this great aſſizes is repreſented "after the manner of the great Synedrion or con- "ſiſtory of Iſrael; wherein the *pater judicii* had "his *Aſſeſſores*, ſitting upon ſeats placed ſemi- "circle-wiſe before him from his right hand to his "left. *I beheld*, ſaith Daniel, ver. 9th, *till the* "*thrones* or ſeats *were pitched down*, namely, for "the ſenators to ſit upon; not *thrown down*, as "we of late have it: *and the Ancient of days* "(pater conſiſtorii) *did ſit*, &c. *And, I beheld,* "*till the judgment was ſet*, that is, the whole "Sanhedrim, *and the books were opened*, &c.— "From this deſcription it came that the Jews gave

" gave it the name of *The Day of Judgement*, and " The Day of the Great Judgement; whence in " the epiſtle of St. Jude, ver. 6th, it is called *The* " *Judgement of the Great Day*.—From the ſame " foundation are derived thoſe expreſſions in the " goſpel, where this day is intimated or deſcribed, " *The Son of man ſhall come in the clouds of hea-* " *ven*; *The Son of man ſhall come in the glory* " *of his Father with his holy angels*: Foraſmuch " as it is ſaid here, *Thouſand thouſands miniſtred* " *unto him*, &c. and that Daniel ſaw *One like the* " *Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven*, " &c.—Hence St. Paul learned that *the ſaints* " *ſhall judge the world*, becauſe it is ſaid, that " *many thrones were ſet*, and ver. 22d, by way of " expoſition, that *Judgement was given to the* " *ſaints of the moſt High*." Mr. Mede's Works, p. 762. And again in another place, ſays the ſame author, " I am ſure that this prophecy of Daniel " was the womb whence the Jewiſh doctors derived " that term of *Day of Judgement* and *Great Day* " *of Judgement*."—And again elſewhere, " Our " Saviour and his apoſtles received this term of " *Day of Judgement* from them, and approve it " by uſing it. But it is far more frequent in the " Chaldee paraphraſe and other writings of theirs " than in the New Teſtament."—Ib. p. 754, 772, &c.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

A Paſſage in the firſt Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians conſidered.——Whether the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians expected the Coming of Chriſt before the End of the Age in which they lived?—Anſwered in the Affirmative.—The ſeeming Riſe of this Expectation;—and various other Strictures.

IN the Epiſtles of St. Paul are divers paſſages which relate to the dead, and the doctrine of the Reſurrection; but not all of them perhaps equally favourable to ſuch notions upon theſe ſubjects as have been hitherto before us. I ſhall firſt conſider thoſe which may ſeem to be of the moſt conſonant kind, and then ſuch others as may ſeem to ſome of a very different nature.

Of the former ſort the following, in 1 Theſſ. iv. 13, &c. may ſeem the moſt proper to begin with. It was probably the firſt written, and ſo far as it goes is remarkably perſpicuous. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye may not ſorrow as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him.* The ſenſe is plainly this, whatever may be thought of the grammatical conſtruction, that if we believe the one we cannot, without being inconſiſtent, deny the other; for which may be ſeen, in part at leaſt,

1 Cor.

1 Cor. xv. 12, and following.---*For this we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord*, deliver as the proper Chriſtian doctrine, and with all the authority and weight which our character as an apoſtle can give it; *that we which are alive, and remaining* upon earth *until the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent*, or be before, *them which are aſleep. For*, the order of the events, if it may be any relief to your minds under the preſſure of the preſent affliction to know it, will be this; *the Lord himſelf will deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Chriſt ſhall firſt riſe:* And *then, we which are the living and remaining* upon the earth till that time, *ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord;* both they and we at the ſame time, and without any difference in this reſpect, or inequality. Here ſomething more upon the ſubject ſeems to be ſuggeſted than has been yet before us, and of ſuch a ſort as to need ſome further illuſtration.

The Theſſalonians, it ſeems, had loſt ſome of their friends by death, and were now ſorrowing over them upon that account, in ſome view of the caſe or other. And I am miſtaken if we may not, by obſerving the ſpecific nature of that comfort which the apoſtle adminiſters, collect the more particular cauſe of their ſorrowing, and from thence infer a very material difference in one reſpect between the ideas upon this ſubject of theſe Theſſalonians and of the much greater part of modern Chriſtians.

For

For what is the advice of St. Paul to them under their preſent circumſtances? He puts them in mind in the firſt place of the Chriſtian hope in general, and would not have them ſorrow as thoſe who were not Chriſtians over them that were fallen aſleep in Jeſus; for that when he ſhould come again theſe would be forth-coming with him. This will probably be acknowledged to be the ſenſe of the 13th and 14th verſes by all perſons. —But is this the whole of what is ſuggeſted in this paſſage by St Paul? or rather, having firſt ſuggeſted this general principle of conſolation, does he not go on, in the next verſes, to the mention of ſomething much more particular? in telling them that the living and remaining upon the earth to the coming of the Lord would not *prevent*, be before, or have any advantage in this reſpect over them which were aſleep? for, that the dead in Chriſt would *firſt* riſe, and then, plainly meaning, till then, and not before, the living and remaining upon the earth would be caught up together with them, and thus in the iſſue the whole collective body of them, conſiſting of the raiſed and of thoſe yet living and remaining, would *be ever with the Lord*, that is, from the ſame moment of time, and without any priority or advantage of the one over the other in this reſpect?

But now how is this matter to be conceived of? And how came it to paſs that the Apoſtle ſhould have any motive, or inducement, to mention that as a means of comfort to theſe Theſſalonians, when ſorrowing over their deceaſed friends,

which

which has never perhaps been mentioned in the ſame view ſince, and was never perhaps found neceſſary to be mentioned as a ſource of comfort to ſurviving friends by any modern paſtor?

It is impoſſible, I conceive, not to ſee the only proper anſwer, *viz.* that the ideas of theſe ancient Chriſtians were very different from thoſe of the moderns upon this ſubject; and that the apprehenſion muſt have been now prevalent amongſt them, not of the remote and diſtant, but rather ſoon coming of the Saviour; to ſuch a degree ſo, I mean, as to have rendered the expectation of almoſt any of them, of living till the time, more likely than otherwiſe; and ſo alſo as to have made the departure of their friends by death, to have the appearance of having been to them, in ſome way or other, a diſadvantage. So the reaſoning of St. Paul with the Theſſalonians in this paſſage ſeems to me to ſuggeſt, and perhaps ſome further illuſtration of the ſame point may hereafter come before us. For the preſent it may perhaps be full as proper to conſider the probable riſe of it, and how far it may be applied with propriety to the illuſtration of ſome other paſſages of the New Teſtament.

For the riſe of it we are to look back, I apprehend, to the Diſcourſe of Jeſus with his diſciples concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, as St. Matthew has given it, in the 24th and 25th chapters of his Goſpel: they are the ſame Diſcourſe continued, according to the Evangeliſt; and it ſeems to be of ſome importance to the argument that this be attended to. It is ſaid in chap. xxiv. the

firſt

firſt verſe and following; *And Jeſus went out, and departed from the temple; and his diſciples came to him for to ſhew him the buildings of the temple. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, See ye all theſe things? Verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall not be left here one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down.* It is added, *And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives*, which we may ſuppoſe to have been only ſome little time after; *the diſciples came unto him privately, ſaying, Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be?* ſuch overthrow of the city and temple? *and what ſhall be the ſign of thy coming?* of thy ſo coming? *and of the end of the world?* or, of the preſent Jewiſh age or diſpenſation? as ſome chooſe, for very obvious reaſons, to tranſlate the paſſage; and as I alſo would moſt willingly do, if I could perſuade myſelf that ſuch is the meaning. But that it really is not, is, I think, as clear as needs be from our Saviour's anſwer; which evidently and directly goes, as St. Matthew has given it, not to this emendation or correction, but to the queſtions which our tranſlation ſuppoſes; and ſpeaks of the end of the Jewiſh city and ſtate, and end of the world, as being only different parts of the ſame great event, and as having a ſort of ſimultaneous coincidence, or nearneſs together. For as to the pretence of a particularly figurative repreſentation of the former of theſe only, in verſe 29th and 30th, in language taken, as is ſaid, from the ancient prophets, it has not, I obſerve, been in general ſatisfactory to ſome of the very firſt and beſt expoſitors, and will not, I think, be ſo to any

who ſhall properly conſider the leſs turgid and ſwelling, and more plain and eaſy manner of our Saviour's teachings; neither has this other hypotheſis of ſome, of a tranſition made from the one of theſe ſubjects to the other in verſe 36th, been to me more convincing; as I ſeem to ſee before this particular verſe, this verſe of tranſition as we may for the preſent call it, the end of the world clearly ſpoken of, and with the ſame clearneſs the overthrow of the Jewiſh ſtate and affairs referred to in ſome of the verſes after it: whence therefore I conclude, that both in the queſtioning of the diſciples with Jeſus, and in his anſwer to them, at leaſt as here given, theſe ſubjects were rather blended together than diſtinctly conceived of; and that into this confuſion of ideas, miſconception, or error, principally, for whatever reaſon permitted, and in whatever way to be accounted for *, we are to

* "And thus much," ſays Mr. Mede, in his works, p. 665, where he has been explaining, in his way, 1 Pet. iv. 7. and ſome other texts,—"I thought to add to my former diſcourſe "of *Latter Times*, leſt through ignorance thereof we might "incline to that little better than blaſphemous conceit which "*Baronius* by name, and ſome other of *Rome*'s followers have "taken up, viz. *That the apoſtles in ſuch like paſſages as we have* "*noted were miſtaken, as believing the end of the world ſhould have* "*been in their time*; *God of purpoſe ſo ordering it, to cauſe in them* "*a greater meaſure of zeal and contempt of worldly things.* An "opinion, I think, not well becoming a Chriſtian."—Others however, beſides *Rome*'s followers, and thoſe no ordinary Chriſtians neither, have given into the ſame conceit or notion, unleſs Grotius, Locke, and Tillotſon; to whom perhaps might be added Hammond, Le Clerc, and ſome others, are denied to be

to reſolve ſuch an expectation of the ſpeedy coming of the Saviour as we have already ſeen, and may further ſee hereafter, to have been ſo general amongſt the firſt Chriſtians *; and by the adoption

be of this deſcription; but I do not know whether all of them accounted for it upon *Baronius*'s principle. For myſelf I have ventured to ſuggeſt above what ſome perhaps may be willing to conſider, *viz.* that Jeſus himſelf wrote nothing, and that therefore we muſt be content with his doctrines and diſcourſes as his diſciples and followers conceived of them, and have, according to ſuch conceiving, delivered them to us. By the acknowlegement of St. Paul himſelf we have the divine treaſure in earthen veſſels, and where then would be the wonder if it ſhould have received from thence ſome tincture?

"I look upon it," ſaid a plain, ſincere, honeſt-hearted mechanic, to the writer of theſe papers, "that we have two "lights, reaſon and Scripture, and my notion is, that we "have the firſt pure."—"You think then," ſaid I, "that we "may not poſſibly have the laſt quite ſo, and as it was in the "beginning?"—"That," quoth he, "is my opinion."—This perſon, I believe, prayed in his family, and was quite regular in his attendance upon public Chriſtian worſhip and the Lord's Supper; and to me, I confeſs, the obſervations of perſon of this ſort, coming native from the heart, and ſeemingly without ſyſtematical or ſiniſter deſign, have always ſeemed very valuable.

* They who urge, 2 Theſſ. ii. 1, 2. as an objection to this, may be rather ſaid to produce an additional argument. For what do St. Paul's words there amount to? He would not have the Theſſalonians *to be ſoon ſhaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by ſpirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from him, as if the day of Chriſt was at hand*, or inſtant. But how could they poſſibly have been ſo, which it ſeems they were at leaſt in danger of, unleſs ſuch ideas upon the ſubject had been prevalent as we have been above ſuppoſing, and as his own firſt epiſtle had no

tion and application of which I would aſk, whether we may not be aſſiſted in the explication, beſides ſome other things, of theſe following?

Firſt, the falling away, or apoſtacy, and revelation of the man of ſin; meaning no doubt ſome one particularly wicked individual, or elſe ſome wicked faction or party, conſidered corporately; of which we read in the ſecond epiſtle of St. Paul to the Theſſalonians, chap. ii.? For why think, and as I ſuppoſe I may ſay, uncharitably think, of ſuch remote and late ſubjects and perſons as the church and biſhop of Rome, &c. in the reading, when it ſeems ſo certain that St. Paul at leaſt could have no ſuch reference, and in this diſcourſe of our Saviour's in Matt. xxiv. 10, 12, 13, 22, &c. there ſeems to be enough ſaid upon apoſtacy, &c. to lead to ſome other and perhaps more pertinent explication *?

And ſo alſo I am diſpoſed to explain what we read, and ſeemingly with reference to the ſame general ſubject, in 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3; notwithſtanding the ſkill and pains uſed by Mr. Joſeph Mede and others to find the ſame church and

tendency to diſcourage?—And what does he now ſay to the contrary? *Let no man deceive you by any means. For that day ſhall not come, except there come a falling away firſt*, &c. As if this was putting it off for chiliads, or even centuries! See in another note below ſome further illuſtration.

* It is accordingly explained of perſons and factions in the firſt century, though not exactly in the ſame way, by Grotius, Le Clerc, Hammond, Whitby, &c.

biſhop

biſhop here alſo, of which below ſome little notice ſhall be taken *.

As

* According to the writer above mentioned we are to underſtand by the *devils* or dæmons, in verſe the firſt, the departed ſaints of the Chriſtian church, and by the *doctrines* of ſuch dæmons, not doctrines proceeding from them, and of which they may be ſuppoſed to have been the authors or inſpirers, but *concerning* them, and of which they were rather the ſubject; contrary, I conceive, to every principle of juſt interpretation. For firſt, how is it to be made appear that the Greek word *dæmon*, not ill tranſlated *devil*, I apprehend, both here and in other places, and always, as appears by the connection, a word of odious import in the New Teſtament, is ever taken in ſo good a ſenſe by the writers of it as to be ſuppoſed applicable, and to be in fact applied in this place, to the mother of Chriſt, and to Chriſtian confeſſors and martyrs? Not certainly in this paſſage in the Acts, chap. xvii. 18. which however Mr. Mede quotes in this view, *He ſeemeth to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange dæmons*; for the perſons there ſpeaking were idolaters, who did indeed take the word in a good ſenſe according to their own ſyſtem, as they alſo did *idol*, *Jupiter*, *Mercury*, &c; but what does this prove of the writer of the Acts, who is in this inſtance a reporter only? Neither is his other inſtance, taken from verſe 22d, and which he thus tranſlates, more to his purpoſe: *Ye men of Athens, I ſee you in all things too full of dæmons already.* For the apoſtle is only aſſerting a matter of fact, in words which both they and he could agree in, but in the explication of which, had they proceeded to an explication, they muſt certainly have differed. "*Ye are—more than others given to the worſhip of dæmons*; i. e. "more religious than others. He did not mean, that it was "a true religion, nor did he begin with telling them directly, "that it was a falſe religion." So Bp. Pearſe has given the meaning. And beſides theſe, Mr. Mede has only mentioned theſe two other authorities; 1 Cor. x. 21. Rev. ix. 13; which ſeem to be leſs, if leſs can be, to the purpoſe. The truth ſeems to be, that the Jews, having received from the Greeks

As for this other paſſage, concerning Antichriſt, in 1 John ii. 18. the reference in it to our Saviour's pro-

the word dæmon, applied it, as we have before ſeen them to do the word hades, to their own ſyſtem, and to have repreſented to themſelves by it thoſe evil beings or angels who were ſuppoſed with Satan to have fallen from heaven, and, by Divine permiſſion, (whether truly or not) to have aſſumed to themſelves a ſort of Divine homage and worſhip among the heathens, and to have ſo afflicted and poſſeſſed the bodies of men as they are often ſpoken of as doing in the four evangeliſts. So we may obſerve that Milton, who was a great divine as well as poet, underſtood this matter; See Paradiſe Loſt, Book I. 364—375; which St. Matthew, chap. xxv. 41. and St. James, chap. ii. 19. very much confirm. And if ſo, what can be conceived more inadmiſſible than the notion, that the mother of Chriſt, and that Chriſtian ſaints, &c. ſhould be ſpoken of under ſuch an appellation? As no man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jeſus accurſed, (1 Cor. xii. 3.) none for the ſame reaſon ſurely would call them dæmons. To have called the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Baal, Ammon, or Jupiter, muſt have ſeemed to the firſt Chriſtians full as congruous.

And why alſo, ſecondly, underſtand by *doctrines of dæmons*, doctrines or notions concerning them, (however, Heb. vi. 1. may ſeem to furniſh one inſtance of ſuch an unuſual conſtruction) when it ſeems ſo evident, from the arrangement of the words in the firſt and third verſes, that the apoſtle's meaning was different? In the laſt of which verſes he ſeems intentionally to ſpeak of the doctrines themſelves, as he had in the former of the original and the authors of them? They were in themſelves prohibitory of marriage, and commanding abſtinence from meats; of which, not the Spirit of God, but rather evil and wicked ſpirits might be reckoned the promoters.

So the meaning moſt probably is, and the reference perhaps made to ſuch wrong notions upon theſe ſubjects as were already not uncommon among the Jews and Gnoſtics, and by them early brought into the church: and of conſequence ſo void of

any

prophecy of the falſe Chriſts which ſhould make their appearance before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, has always ſeemed to me ſo pointed and direct, that I cannot but wonder how any perſons, induced by ſo frivolous a conſideration as that which is mentioned below *, ſhould have ever given in to any other

any ſolid foundation in this text would ſeem to be Mr. Mede's diſcourſe upon *The Apoſtacy of the Latter Times*, however learnedly, as a matter of fact only, the ſaint and angel-worſhip of the Romiſh church may be proved in it, with which I do not here meddle.

Of the ſame famous author I know not how to omit this other obſervation, his referring us to Daniel, chap. xi. 36. for an explication of the words, *Now the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſsly*, &c. In which place of Daniel a reader yet unpractiſed in ſyſtem will probably be ſo far from thinking there is any expreſs ſpeaking upon the ſubjects which St. Paul mentions, that he may perhaps at firſt rather wonder what could have led this celebrated perſon to ſuſpect between the two paſſages any connection whatſoever. A ſtriking inſtance it undoubtedly is of that zeal and diligence with which this writer choſe to ſeek for and find the church and biſhop of Rome, *in abditiſſimos prophetiarum receſſus*, as the writer of his life expreſſes it, in the leaſt ſuſpected, and in this view yet untouched parts of the Scriptures.

* Our Saviour in his prophecy ſpeaks of falſe Chriſts or Antichriſts, but St. John of one only; that is, of one different from the reſt, and by way of eminence; as ſome chooſe to underſtand him. As if the putting of one for many, or all of the ſame ſort, was not a very common figure of ſpeech in all languages, and in none more ſo than in the Scriptures! The following are only a few inſtances; Rom. i. 16. chap. iii. 1. chap. ix. 20. 1 Cor. i. 20. Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11. 1 Tim.

other expoſition. This however has been done, and more particularly of late, by certain zealous Proteſtant divines of no ordinary fame and character; and concerning whom it might ſeem not very becoming in me ſo to ſpeak, without aſſigning ſome reaſons. This I ſhall the more willingly do, as it may tend ſtill more to eſtabliſh, or elſe wholly to ſet aſide, thoſe different notions upon the coming of Chriſt, and other kindred ſubjects, which have been before exhibited.

" Theſe prophecies," ſays Biſhop Hurd, in his Sermons at the Warburtonian Lecture, Serm. v.— he means concerning the coming of Chriſt, " may " be conſidered under two heads. They either " reſpect *the perſon and character and office of* " *the Meſſiah;* or, *the fate and fortunes of that* " *kingdom* which he came to eſtabliſh in the " world.

" Divines call the former of theſe, Prophecies of " his FIRST COMING; and the other, Prophecies

iii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 24. Matt. xxii. 11. And in this very epiſtle of John, chap. ii. 9, 10. 11. chap. iii. 8, 9, &c.

And ſo Horace,

Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, ——————

— hic niger eſt, hunc tu, *Romane*, caveto.

And again Virgil,

Tu regere imperio populos, *Romane*, memento.

And in like manner perhaps every other author.

That St. John lived the longeſt, and wrote probably the lateſt, of all the apoſtles, is not to be forgotten upon this occaſion.

" of

" of his SECOND. Only, it may be proper to ob-
" ſerve, that the *ſecond* advent of the Meſſiah is
" not, like the *firſt*, confined to one ſingle and
" preciſe period, but is gradual and ſucceſſive."—
This it is hoped the reader will obſerve, and the evidence which is brought for it; much being meant to be grounded upon it.—" This diſtinction
" is founded in the reaſon of the thing. He could
" only come *in perſon*, at one limited time."—I know not why this ſhould be aſſerted: why not more times than one, if more were neceſſary? and will he not ſo come, that is, in perſon, at the end of the world?—" He comes, *in his power and pro-*
" *vidence*, through all ages of the church. His
" *firſt* coming was then over, when he expired on
" the croſs. His *ſecond* commenced with his
" Reſurrection, and will continue to the end of
" the world. So that this *laſt* coming of Jeſus is
" to be underſtood of his *ſpiritual kingdom*; which
" is not one act of ſovereignty exerted at once;
" but a ſtate or conſtitution of government, ſub-
" ſiſting through a long tract of time, unfolding
" itſelf by juſt degrees, and *coming* as oft as the con-
" ductor of it thinks fit to interpoſe by any ſignal
" acts of his adminiſtration. And in this ſenſe we
" are directed to pray *that his kingdom*, though
" long ſince ſet up, *may come*; that is, may advance
" through all its ſtages, till it arrive at that full
" ſtate of glory, in which it ſhall ſhine out in *the*
" *great day*, as it is called, the day of judgement."
—Here I think it may deſerve the conſideration of all ſuch as do not wiſh to be in error, whether the

account given in this paſſage of the *ſecond* coming of Chriſt is not as far removed from ſimplicity as can be well conceived of? and is not alſo wholly irreconcilable to divers expreſs paſſages in the New Teſtament *, in which this *ſecond* coming is uniformly ſuppoſed to be as much *in perſon*, and for *once* only, as the *firſt?* and a very different thing from that *coming of his kingdom* which the Lord's prayer mentions?—But to proceed, for the preſent, to the ſeventh of theſe ſermons, upon this very text in St. John, 1 Eph. ii. 18. in which the ſame ideas are ſtill continued.

" THE FIRST ACCOUNT we meet with in Scrip-
" ture of the power in queſtion, I mean, under his
" proper name of *Antichriſt*, is in the firſt epiſtle
" of St. John, from which the text is taken. The
" whole paſſage runs thus:---*Little children, it is*
" *the laſt time: And, as ye have heard that Anti-*
" *chriſt ſhall come, even now there are many Anti-*
" *chriſts; whereby we know that it is the laſt*
" *time.*

" To underſtand theſe words, we muſt call to
" mind what hath been already, more than once,
" obſerved concerning the ſcriptural diviſion of
" time into two great portions, The FORMER, and
" LATTER times. By the *former*, is meant the
" times preceding the Chriſtian æra; by the *latter*,

* John xiv. 3. Acts i. 11. chap. iii. 19, 20, 21. 1 Cor. xv. 23. Philip. iii. 20, 21. 1 Theſſ. i. ult. Heb. ix. ult. James v. 7, 8, 9. Rev. i. 7. chap. xxii. 12.

" the

" the times ſubſequent to it *. Correſpondent to " this partition of time, is the double advent of " Chriſt, of which I before gave a diſtinct idea. " His *firſt* advent was, when he came in the fleſh " at Jeruſalem: his *ſecond* advent is to be under- " ſtood of his coming in his kingdom, through all " the ages of the Chriſtian church.

" But though the *latter times*, in the general " ſenſe of Scripture, be thus comprehenſive, they " are further ſubdivided into other conſtituent por- " tions, in which ſome particular ſtate of Chriſt's " kingdom is adminiſtred, and within which it is " completed. In reference to this ſubordinate " diviſion of time in the Chriſtian diſpenſation, the

* So, beſides this great prelate, divers other divines have been willing to ſuppoſe. But whether with truth may be queſtioned. *Latter times* are to be oppoſed no doubt to *former times*, and diſtinguiſhed from the *preſent times*; and as the Jewiſh prophets, in whoſe writings the phraſe moſt frequently occurs, lived at or near the Babyloniſh captivity, an event which made a prodigious *break* in their hiſtory, and of which they wrote principally, it would perhaps be ſafeſt to ſay, if any one ſenſe of the phraſe muſt be abided by, that by *latter* times is meant the times ſubſequent to the captivity, and by *former* times the times antecedent to it; though this alſo is too ſyſtematical, and would ſometimes lead us into error. When Jacob, for inſtance, in Gen. xlix. 1. called his ſons together, that he might " tell them what ſhould befal them in the *laſt* days," it is evident that he begins much ſooner; and in Numb. xxiv. 14, where Balaam " advertiſes Balak, king of Moab, what the " Iſraelites would do to his people in the *latter* days," it is equally certain that he does not come down ſo low; and perhaps in all inſtances the only infallible rule to go by is, to conſider the time and ſcope of the writer, and judge of the meaning of the phraſe in the given paſſage accordingly.

" *coming*

" *coming* of Chriſt is, alſo, proportionably multi-
" plied. He *comes* in each diviſion; that is, as
" oft as he thinks fit to interpoſe by any ſignal act
" of his power and providence. The whole period,
" in which any diſtinct ſtate of his kingdom is
" carrying on, is alſo called the *latter time*; and
" the concluding part of that period is diſtinguiſhed
" by the name of the *laſt hour*: as if the whole of
" each period was conſidered as *one day*; and the
" cloſe of each period, as the end, or *laſt hour* of
" that day.

" Thus the time that elapſed from Chriſt's aſcen-
" ſion to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, being one
" of the ſubdiviſions before mentioned, is called
" the *latter times*; and the eve of its deſtruction,
" is called the *laſt hour*. He *was coming* through
" the whole time: he came in the end of it. And
" the like uſe of theſe terms is to be made,
" in other inſtances. We are to apply them in
" the ſame manner to the *reign of Antichriſt*—to
" the *Millenium*---to the *day of judgement*. Each
" of theſe ſtates, into which the *latter times*, or
" the times of Chriſtianity, are divided, is likewiſe
" ſpoken of under the idea of the *latter times*;
" and the ſeaſon, in which it is drawing to an end,
" is the *laſt hour* of that ſtate."

To deny to the whole, and every part of this repreſentation, the praiſe of much ingenuity, and of very careful forethought, were unjuſt. We have here *latter times*, ſome after others, and all of them reſpectively attended with their peculiar and appropriate *laſt hours*, and a principle alſo of ſuch latitude

latitude ſuggeſted, as would, if allowed, enable any one, whoſe ſyſtem ſhould need it, to provide himſelf with as many of each, as he ſhould chance to have occaſion for. And all this, the reader will obſerve, is done, to explain only for the preſent, a paſſage in St. John, whoſe well known ſimplicity and artleſſneſs of manner are ſuch as to render him, perhaps, of all the writers of the New Teſtament, the laſt to be ſuſpected of ſo much ſubtility. And for what purpoſe? Why, only to avoid the allowing to St. John a ſhare in that apprehenſion concerning the ſpeedy coming of the Saviour, and near approach of the end of all things, which we have ſeen to have been now common, for whatever reaſon, to St. Paul, the Theſſalonians, and ſome others; and which, therefore, being allowed, does not bring upon us any additional and new difficulty.

CHAPTER V.

The fifteenth Chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians considered:——Of the Resurrection of the Body more particularly.

THIS is the most particular in some respects, and by far the most splendid of all the passages upon the subject of the Resurrection, and is probably seldom read either in public or more privately without emotion. My business however at present is to consider it rather critically than devotionally, and in that view only as far as immediately concerns the subject. In this view the things following may be worth observing;

First, the sameness of the subject in general, as proposed in ver. 12th, with that which has been before us hitherto. *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no Resurrection of the dead?* of deceased or dead persons? And to this same idea we seem to be led by those other passages in this chapter in which, upon the supposition of no Resurrection, such as were fallen asleep in Christ are supposed to be *perished*, to *have believed in vain*, and to be *of all mankind the most miserable*. And to the same conclusion we seem to be still more forcibly led, if possible, by the slight and incidental manner in which the body is spoken of, as if having no very essential relation to the subject,

ſubject, in verſe 35th and following, of which more hereafter.

The univerſality alſo of the Reſurrection, in reſpect of the ſubjects of it, is another particular worth obſerving; being here the ſame as was ſuggeſted in St. John's Goſpel formerly. It was there ſaid, "that *all* that were in the graves ſhould "hear the voice of the Son of God and come "forth, both they which have done good and "they which have done evil:" and ſo it is ſaid here, in ver. 22d, that "as in Adam *all* die, "ſo in Chriſt ſhall *all* be made alive;" and the ſame is implied in other paſſages. It has indeed been ſaid by ſome, that St. Paul in this chapter is ſpeaking of the *all* that are in Chriſt, or of believers only. But as this does not very well agree with the *all* in Adam that die, and the paſſage in St. John cannot poſſibly be ſo limited, I perceive nothing that is gained, while the ſimplicity of the text is diſturbed, by this propoſed variation; and the much better account of the matter would ſeem to be, as Mr. Locke has ſuggeſted, that the apoſtle having aſſerted the Reſurrection of all without exception in ver. 22d, does then particularize that of Chriſt, as the head or principal, and next that of thoſe who were Chriſt's at his coming, without proceeding to that of others, as being not now neceſſary to be inſiſted upon. It is, however, to be acknowledged that there are other paſſages in which the Reſurrection may ſeem to be ſpoken of as what would be peculiar in ſome way

or

or other to the righteous, of which below ſome notice ſhall be taken *.

Thirdly, in reſpect of what may ſeem to have been moſt peculiar in the paſſages from the Epiſtles to the Theſſalonians, there are ſome in this chapter of the ſame nature and tendency. We there obſerved St. Paul to aſſert, that the dead in Chriſt would firſt riſe, and that then, and not before, the living and remaining upon earth would be caught up together with them in the clouds, &c. —and ſo we are told, with ſome additional information, in this chapter, ver. 50th and following. *Now this I ſay, brethren,*---it is the collected ſenſe as it were and ſubſtance of all that I have been ſaying hitherto;---*that fleſh and blood*, ſuch as we at preſent have them, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit*

* So in St. Luke, chap. xiv. 14;—*for they cannot recompenſe thee: for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the juſt.* Again in chap. xx. 35, 36. *But they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the Reſurrection of the dead;—and are the children of God, being the children of the Reſurrection.* Philip. iii. 11. *If by any means I may attain unto the Reſurrection of the dead.*—What ſhall we ſay? That the doctrine of the Reſurrection was at firſt the Reſurrection of the juſt only? though afterwards ſo explained as to take in others? Or, that it is in theſe places ſo ſpoken of, becauſe it will be in the event a bleſſing to theſe only? Much in the ſame manner as real Chriſtians or believers are ſometimes excluſively ſpoken of as the *called*, (as in Rom. viii. 28, 30. 1 Cor. i. 2, 24, 26. Rev. xvii. 14.) though the goſpel call or invitation be the ſame to all, and in the ſtricteſt ſenſe univerſal, becauſe that theſe alone will in the event be the better for it. This to me ſeems the beſt ſolution.

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incorruption; it is not fit for it, nor capable of it. And in this view, *Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery*, that which I ſuppoſe may not have been till now revealed to you; *we ſhall not all ſleep*, be permitted to fall aſleep in death; (theſe in the Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians are the living and remaining) *but we ſhall all be changed*, thoſe that do not fall aſleep as much as thoſe that do;---*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump, (for the trumpet ſhall ſound;)* ſo alſo in the Theſſalonians, 1 Ep. chap. iv. 16.---*and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we*, the living and remaining, whoever they may be, *ſhall be changed. For*, to mention again what I have before ſaid, becauſe of its importance, (ſee ver. 50th, where the reaſon of it is given) *this corruptible muſt put on incorruption*, in ſome way or other; *and this mortal muſt put on immortality*; the dead by a Reſurrection, and the living and remaining in ſome other way that ſhall be equally effectual; the neceſſity being in both caſes the ſame, though the mode may be different.

Ver. 35th. *But ſome man will ſay*, may be ſuppoſed to ſay, *How are the dead*, that is, dead perſons, *raiſed up? And with what body do they come?* Will they come forth from their graves with the ſame individual body, and in all reſpects, as it was formerly? or will it be of the ſame generic kind only, and in ſome of the more eſſential properties? or, will it be an entirely new body in every conceivable inſtance whatſoever? So the

meaning ſeems to be, and the deſign of St. Paul to have been, to give to the objecting perſon, in the aſking of theſe and ſuch like queſtions, as much liberty as poſſible.

Here then I would aſk, whether the things following are not obſervable; firſt, in the very queſtioning itſelf, a remarkable diſtinction made by St. Paul between the Reſurrection of the dead, conſidered ſubſtantially, and in reference to the perſons themſelves, and any intereſt or concern which the body may or may not have in it? This I think is ſuggeſted by the terms of the two queſtions or objections.—Secondly, in the very manner of St. Paul's anſwer is there not ſomething rather ſlighting of them, and almoſt contemptuous? *But ſome man will ſay*, may perhaps be found who will ſay, *How, and with what body*, &c;---which ſeems to be a ſort of degradation of ſuch a perſon from the character and rank of the more judicious ſort of inquirers, and to repreſent him as being employed in what was ſubordinate upon the ſubject, and ſecondary only; an idea which the following terms, *Thou fool*, or ſenſeleſs one, much confirms.--- Thirdly, in the very anſwer itſelf, which St. Paul has returned, is there not ſomething, though ſpecious, yet remarkably vague and indeterminate? For what does all that he ſays, of the ſeed being ſown, and firſt dying ere it be quickened, and then God giving it a body, and to every ſeed, whether of wheat or of ſome other grain, its own body, amount to; more than to the proof or illuſtration, call it which

which we will, of a generic or ſpecific fameneſs only? or, however, principally *? which is not all probably, nor perhaps the principal part of what the objector, at leaſt if thoſe of old were like many of the moderns, moſt wiſhed to be informed in. And from what is further ſaid, and with an evident reference to the ſame ſubject, in the 39th and following verſes, of the different kinds of fleſh or body, and the variety of the materials compoſing them, &c. I doubt whether the inference to be drawn, if any muſt, will not be rather in favour of the *newneſs* than the *fameneſs*, in almoſt every ſenſe, of the reſurrection body. But, however theſe things may be, nothing ſurely can be more obvious from the whole than this is, that in the idea of St. Paul, all inquiries of this ſort were rather foreign than very pertinent to the doctrine which he preached, which was not the Reſurrection of bodies, but of perſons, and which was ſtill the ſame, whether it could, or could not be determined to preſent ſatisfaction, *How they would be raiſed, and with what body they would come.* A remarkable indication, as ſeems to me, of ſome material difference in the apprehenſions of the firſt Chriſtians and the

* Should it be objected, that between the individual grain or ſeed ſown, and that which ſprings up from it, there ſeems to be ſomething more of fameneſs, unity, or relationſhip, than what is generical only, the obſervation is admitted; but how ſhall we apply it to the ſubject before us? Few things are more myſterious in their nature than the generation or production of one thing from another. And how ſhall that explain, which ieſelf wants an explanation?

moderns upon this ſubject; for what can be a clearer evidence of it, than that the latter, in their diſcourſes and meditations upon the Reſurrection, have uſually confined themſelves to that only, or however principally, which St. Paul appears to have little thought of?

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

Some other Paſſages conſidered;——Thoſe in the ſecond Epiſtle to the Corinthians, chap. v. *more particularly.*

I AM now to conſider thoſe other paſſages in St. Paul's Epiſtles which may ſeem to be leſs favourable, and as ſome have ſuppoſed utterly irreconcilable, to ſuch views of the Reſurrection as have been before us hitherto. Theſe are two principally: this in the ſecond Epiſtle to the Corinthians, and that in the Philippians, chap. i. 23. As this laſt however may ſeem to be little different in ſenſe from the former, more eſpecially that part of it ver. 6th; and moſt obviouſly to be judged of, in its meaning, by ſome principle which applies to both equally; I ſhall therefore confine myſelf to the firſt only; and in doing this would willingly take the paſſage by itſelf, without the conſideration of its conſiſtency, or otherwiſe, with ſuch other paſſages in this ſame Apoſtle as have been already conſidered. Such liberty being allowed me, for the preſent at leaſt, I aſk whether the ſenſe may not be thus generally repreſented?

For which cauſe,——to go ſo far back as chap. iv. 16th, where this context moſt properly begins, and in which the Apoſtle is referrring to ſuch ſufferings for Chriſt, and conſolations under them, as have been mentioned in the preceding verſes,—*we faint not, but though our outward man*

periſh, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For, or becauſe that, *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.*

For, to explain this whole matter more at large, *we know that if our earthly houſe of tabernacle;* this body, in which we at preſent dwell as in a tabernacle or ſlight ſtructure, ſet up for preſent conveniency, and meant to endure for a time only; *were diſſolved,* unlooſed, or disjoined in its parts, ſo as to be a tabernacle or tent no longer, *we have a building of God,* (here the pointed oppoſition in the phraſeology to the earthly and fragile tabernacle is obſervable) *a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this,* this earthly diſſoluble tabernacle, and which ſcarcely deſerves to be called a houſe or building, I acknowlege that *we groan, earneſtly deſiring to have our manſion from heaven put upon us. If ſo be that being* ſo *clothed,* (he ſpeaks hypothetically, becauſe he could not be ſure that this would be the caſe) *we ſhall not be found naked,* or amongſt the naked,* at the coming

* He includes amongſt the *naked,* if I underſtand this paſſage right, thoſe who were aſleep in Chriſt, or ſhould be ſo at his coming, as well as others: thoſe who, being in their graves, had not yet, as well as thoſe who never ſhould put on immortal bodies. Of thoſe who never would be *naked,* not even for a moment, the heavenly body being ſuperinduced, ere the other ſhould be off, he ſpeaks afterwards.

of

of the Lord Jeſus. See 2 Peter iii. 4, and 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. in illuſtration.

For, to enlarge ſtill more upon this ſubject, ſo delightful to be dwelt upon, *we that are in this tabernacle do* indeed *groan, being burdened;* and may, perhaps, be allowed to do ſo, under ſuch preſſures as thoſe which have been deſcribed above in chap. iv. 9, 10;---but then, to what a degree, and how far do we do this?——*not ſo far as that we would be unclothed*, or want to get rid of the body only, and at any rate;—they who think ſo, if any ſuch there be, are quite miſtaken in the nature of the caſe;—not, I ſay then, that we would only be unclothed, and ſimply ſo;—*but clothed upon*, by having that ſame houſe or manſion from heaven, which I before ſpake of, put upon us; *that* ſo *mortality*, all that is mortal in us, and which cannot as ſuch inherit the kingdom of God, *might*, if it ſhall ſo pleaſe God, *be ſwallowed up of life*, be all at once abſorbed, loſt, and done away in it, without our having any particular conſciouſneſs of the caſe, and pain or fear of dying whatſoever!—So the meaning appears to me to be, and the Apoſtle to be thinking in this paſſage of that inſtantaneous change of the living and remaining upon earth till the coming of Chriſt, which we have already (in the preceding chapter) ſeen him to ſpeak of, and of which he ſeems to be here expreſſing his earneſt hope and deſire of being a partaker. It is, perhaps, needleſs to mention the peculiar propriety which this mode of interpretation gives to the ſtrong and fervent language of, *earneſtly deſiring*, *being clothed*

upon, and mortality being ſwallowed up; which is comparatively cold, and almoſt unmeaning, upon any other ſcheme of thought: and I am miſtaken if we ſhall not ſee further cauſe to acknowledge the ſame thing by obſerving the remarkable alteration of St. Paul's ſtyle in the verſes following.

Now he that hath wrought us to this very thing, the apprehenſion of an event, poſſibly ſuch as this, ſo great in all its circumſtances, and ſo much beyond what mere reaſon and nature could have conceived of, *is God, who hath alſo given us the earneſt of the Spirit*, to bear us out as it were in the expectation of it, and preſerve us in the avowal from being ridiculous. *And therefore*, as I ſaid before, (in chap. iv. 16.) *we are always confident*, or of courage, and do not faint under the troubles and adverſities above mentioned, as we otherwiſe might do, *knowing that ſo long as we ſojourn in the body, we are from our home with the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by ſight* at preſent; and muſt continue ſo to do, while ſuch ſojourning is the caſe with us.) *We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather*; are of the two rather willing than unwilling, and in caſe the other alternative ſhall not be allowed us; *to migrate*, or go out *from the body, and be at home*, as we then ſhould be, *with the Lord*, in the ſenſe of ſafety and protection at leaſt with him, whatever elſe would be then the caſe with us.

Here the change in the language and ideas both, from what we have had before, is obſervable. Before, and while the thoughts of a heavenly houſe or body, of being clothed upon with it, and of mortality

being

being ſwallowed up, were preſent to the Apoſtle's mind, the language was that of earneſtly deſiring, and groaning, being burdened; but now that another train of ideas has ſucceeded, and thoſe alſo full as likely to be realized, though not it ſeems ſo pleaſing, to wit, thoſe of a migration, or going out of the body, and ſo going home to the Lord in the way of dying, or by a natural departure, the language is viſibly changed in proportion, and the Apoſtle, inſtead of vehemently or earneſtly deſiring and groaning, &c. is almoſt as temperate and cool as a modern Chriſtian, and inſtead of ſo earneſtly deſiring, is now only willing, or rather willing, that is, not quite unwilling, to be ſo diſpoſed of, and in this latter way to go home to the Lord, if the other, the leſs painful and more inſtantaneous and immediate, as we may ſuppoſe it to have been thought, was not permitted him. *And therefore we labour*, he adds, *that whether ſojourning* in the body, as is at preſent the caſe, *or migrating* from it, as may poſſibly be the caſe ſoon, *we may be accepted of him*; the object to be always aimed at, and in reſpect of which, there is not in the two caſes any difference. *For*, either ſooner or later, and according to the one mode or the other, *we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad:* and ſo long as this is certain and acknowledged, our obligations and duty are ſtill the ſame, and the ſame our main object, which ever of the two alternatives takes place, and

and however the mode, in the caſe of different perſons, may be different.

So perhaps the meaning of this whole context might ſeem to be, if taken by itſelf, and without any conſideration had to ſuch other views of the nature of death, and of the Reſurrection of the dead, as have been before us.* But how to reconcile a part of it, that part, I mean, which ſpeaks of being abſent from the body, &c. with what has ſeemed to me the more genuine and ſimple doctrine upon theſe ſubjects of Moſes, and of Jeſus, and even of St. Paul himſelf, in ſome former paſſages, more eſpecially that in the firſt epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, chap. iv. I do not find very eaſy.—What then ſhall we ſay? that St. Paul is not altogether conſiſtent with himſelf?

* In ſuch caſe too, I know not whether my reader might not, with ſome appearance of reaſon, rather chooſe to belong to that ſmall ſect or party, who have avowed the belief of, what they are pleaſed to call, an immediate, ſucceſſive, and continual Reſurrection; or, that death is the end of the world, and the day of Chriſt, to every individual; and that this will be eventually the general and only Reſurrection. The writer of the following paſſage is ſaid to have referred in it to this opinion.—"It will not "be long but we muſt all ſtand upon the very confines of eternity; "and all the amuſements of this world will vaniſh away as a "dream. The day of life and grace is faſt haſtening to its "end. The curtains of death will ſoon be drawn between us "and the preſent world. Then the *day of the Lord*, the tre-"mendous day will dawn upon us, and we muſt join the "thouſands that are daily crowding in mighty concourſe, "through the gates of death, to the awful tribunal of God, "there to receive their ſentence for life or death eternal." Eaton's View of Chriſtianity, p. 220.—How far that opinion had been founded upon any critical and very impartial conſideration of the ſubject at large, my information does not enable me to mention.

ſelf? for the inconſiſtency, if there really be any, does plainly reſt with him only: or is there ſome other way of accounting for this difficulty? As the former would have nothing very inadmiſſible in it, might St. Paul be conſidered as an ordinary human writer only, or principally, I ſhall preſume to ſuggeſt in a note below ſome few things upon this ſubject;* but

* St. Paul before his converſion had been a Phariſee, a remarkably zealous and ſtrict Phariſee; and how the perſons of that denomination had addicted themſelves to the philoſophy of Greece, and were diſtinguiſhed in this way from the Sadducees, we have already had occaſion to obſerve more than once; in the latter end of chapter the ſecond more particularly; and might here ſubjoin, if it were neceſſary, no mean authorities. "We know of little learning among the Jews," ſays Sir William Temple, "beſides that of Moſes and Solomon, till after the "captivity, in which their prieſts grew acquainted with the "language and learning of the Chaldeans; but this was ſoon "loſt, in ſuch a broken ſtate as theirs was, after their return to "ſuch a ruined city and deſolate country, and ſo often per"ſecuted by the credit of their enemies in the Perſian court: "the learning, which afterwards we find among the Jews, "came in with the Grecian empire, that introduced their "learning and language, with their conqueſt, into Judea. "Before this there were no diviſion or ſects among the Jews, "but of ſuch as followed the true prophets or the falſe, and "worſhipped God or Baal. With the Grecian language and "learning entered their philoſophy, and out of this aroſe the "grand ſects of Phariſees and Sadducees; the Phariſees, in all "opinions which they could any way conform to their own "worſhip and inſtitutions, followed the philoſophy of Plato; "the Sadducees of Epicurus. The firſt profeſſed the ſtricteſt "rules of virtue and vice; the hopes and fears of rewards "and puniſhments in another world; the exiſtence of angels, "and ſpirits ſeparate from bodies: but the Sadducees believed "little

but only conditionally, and without the ſmalleſt intention of denying that more popular doctrine of an equal, plenary, and abſolute inſpiration, which ſome have aſſerted, and I ſhall willingly conſider, only firſt ſubjoining ſome few other remarks, either of others or my own, on the important paſſage which is yet before me.

" little or nothing of any of theſe, further than to cover themſelves from the hatred and perſecution of the other ſect, which was the moſt popular." Works, in oct. vol. iii. p. 493.——" As the Pythagoreans and Platoniſts," ſays Cudworth, " have always complained of theſe terreſtrial bodies as priſons or living ſepulchres of the ſoul; ſo does Chriſtianity ſeem to run much upon the ſame ſtrain in theſe ſcripture expreſſions, *In this we groan, earneſtly deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe which is from heaven:* and again, *We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed* (that is, ſtripped quite naked of all body) *but* ſo *clothed upon that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.*" Intol. Syſtem, p. 795. So St. Paul's does here ſeemingly.——" *Non ſatis ſibi conſtat*, He is " not ſufficiently conſiſtent," ſays Mr. Moſheim, ſpeaking of Tertullian; " —— *ut ſolent, quibus ingenium ratione potentius obtigit, atque, ut res fert, modo in hanc, modo in oppoſitam partem propendit.* As is often the caſe with men of particularly fervent minds, and in whom emotion rather than reaſon is ſometimes the moſt prevalent." De Reb. Chriſt. p. 420.—— And where then would be the wonder, if in ſuch a mind, the principles of Chriſtianity being received, the ideas of a former ſyſtem ſhould ſtill, in ſome degree, remain, (conceiving of the matter in a human way only) and even gain at ſometimes the aſcendency?

" There are few," ſays Lord Shaftſbury, " who always think conſiſtently, or according to one certain hypotheſis, upon any ſubject ſo intricate as the cauſe of all things, and the œconomy or government of the univerſe.---That alone therefore is to be called a man's opinion, which is of any other the moſt habitual to him, and occurs upon moſt occaſions." Characteriſticks. vol. ii. p. 11.

" This

"This I muſt own is no very eaſy paſſage," ſays Mr. Locke, in his note upon ver. 4th; "whether "we underſtand by *naked*, as I do here, the ſtate "of the dead unclothed with immortal bodies "till the Reſurrection; which ſenſe is favoured by "the ſame word, 1 Cor. xv. 37. or whether we "underſtand *the clothing upon*, which the apoſtle "deſires, to be thoſe immortal bodies, which ſouls "ſhall be clothed with at the Reſurrection, which "ſenſe of clothing upon is favoured by 1. Cor. xv. "53, 54, and is that which one ſhould be inclined "to, were it not accompanied with this difficulty, "*viz.* that, then, it would follow, that the wicked "ſhould not have immortal bodies at the Reſur-"rection. For whatever it be, that St. Paul here "means by being *clothed upon*, it is ſomething pe-"culiar to the ſaints."—Anſwer. It is ſomething, I conceive, even more peculiar than this, *viz.* the being the ſubjects of that inſtantaneous and miraculous change of fleſh and blood into a capacity of inheriting the kingdom of God without putting off the body by dying, which even all the ſaints would not have the happineſs of, and which even St Paul had not, however he may ſeem in this paſſage to deſire it. The Apoſtle, we are to obſerve, is ſpeaking of the ſaints only, and in relation to theſe has put, or is ſuppoſing, theſe two caſes: firſt, the caſe of thoſe who would be found at the coming of Chriſt naked, that is, unclothed as yet with immortal bodies, though not always to continue ſo; as for inſtance, the deceaſed Theſſalonians; and the caſe of thoſe, ſecondly, who ſhould not in this ſenſe

be

be found naked at all, having the heavenly houſe or body put upon them, before the other would, to any ſenſible obſervation or conſciouſneſs of their own, be gotten rid of; as would be the caſe with the living and remaining. This, I truſt, removes the difficulty, and ſhews the ſuperior reaſonableneſs of abiding by the firſt of the two alternatives, which Mr. Locke mentions; little of real difficulty as there is in the latter, ſo far as relates to the immortal bodies of the wicked, as will be obſerved hereafter.---For all the reſt, this great author's words in his paraphraſe are ſo full and confirming of ſome things which have been already mentioned, that I know not how to reſiſt the temptation to tranſcribe them, and of ſhielding myſelf in this way, ſo far as any thing of the unpopular kind may have been above written, by ſo great an authority. " For I know, that if this " my body, which is but as a tent, for my ſojourning " here upon earth, for a ſhort time, were diſſolved, " I ſhall have another, of a divine original, which " ſhall not, like buildings made with men's hands, be " ſubject to decay, but ſhall be eternal in the " heavens. For in this tabernacle I groan, earneſtly " deſiring, without putting off this mortal earthly " body, by death, to have that celeſtial body ſu- " perinduced: If ſo be, the coming* of Chriſt ſhall

* " That the Apoſtle looked on the coming of Chriſt, as not " far off, appears, by what he ſays, 1 Theſſ. iv. 15, and " chap. v. 6. which epiſtle was written ſome years before this. " See alſo, to the ſame purpoſe, 1 Cor. i. 7. and vii. 29, 31. " and x. 11. Rom. xiii. 11. 12. Heb. x. 17."——To which, as written by other apoſtles, theſe might have been added, James v. 7. 8. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 7. &c.

" overtake

" overtake me, before I put off this body. For " we, that are in the body, groan under the preſ- " ſures and inconveniencies that attend us in it; " which yet we are not therefore willing to put off, " but had rather, without dying, have it changed " into a celeſtial, immortal body, that ſo this " mortal ſtate may be put an end to, by an imme- " diate entrance into an immortal life. Now it is " God, who prepares us for this immortal ſtate, " who alſo gives us the Spirit as a pledge of it."

" How the Spirit," ſays Dr. Taylor upon the Romans, in his note upon chap. viii. 27th, " quali- " fies the ſecret groanings of true Chriſtians, under " the preſſures of life, may be ſeen, 2 Cor. v. 3, 4, " 5, which place Mr. Locke has left in great obſcu- " rity. Take the ſenſe of it thus, ver. 2, for in " this we groan, earneſtly deſiring to be clothed " upon with that heavenly body, which we hope " to receive when this earthly fabrick is diſſolved— " ver. 3. *If ſo be we ſhall be found clothed upon,* " *not naked.* As if he had ſaid, But theſe deſires are " founded upon this ſuppoſition, that we take due " care to improve our preſent opportunities, to the " ſanctifying of our hearts, that we may in the day " of our Lord be found among thoſe who are " clothed with immortal bodies, and not among " the wicked, in a naked condition, as being " doomed to the ſecond death.—ver. 4. And we " groan under the preſſures of our preſent ſtate, ſo " far, that it is not through impatience of conti- " nuance here, as if we would gladly be rid of " life at any rate; but through a deſire of being

" clothed

"clothed with our heavenly immortal body; that "we may have quite done with mortality, and may "enter upon a happy life, which ſhall never end. "ver. 5. Now he who has brought us to this diſ- "poſition of mind is God, who, for this end, has "given us his Spirit as a pledge of immortality, "and to diſpoſe us to a patient waiting for it.——

"What led Mr. Locke into his miſtake was, "1. A ſuppoſition that St. Paul believed our "Lord's coming was not far off; and that poſſibly "it might happen while he (Paul) was alive: con- "trary to the Apoſtle's expreſs declaration at large, "2 Theſſ. ii. 1. &c. 2. That wicked men have "immortal bodies. But what have the wicked to "do with immortality, who ſhall be puniſhed "with everlaſting deſtruction, 2 Theſſ. i. 9.?"

In the whole of this paſſage, in which we ſee the ſcholar contending with his maſter, (for ſuch was Mr. Locke to Taylor, Benſon, and others of the ſame connection; ſo at leaſt they choſe to aſſume, and as ſuch to boaſt of him, as occaſion ſerved:) I obſerve ſomething to approve, but more to cenſure. For firſt, it is not by any means true, that the ſuppoſition here aſcribed to Mr. Locke concerning the coming of Chriſt, is contrary to the expreſs declaration of the Apoſtle himſelf in 2 Theſſ. ii. 1. &c. where there is certainly no ſuch declaration to be found, no, nor any thing equivalent to it implied, or even hinted at, unleſs we will aſſume, as true, ſuch modern expoſitions upon the place, as have perhaps no other foundation than prepoſſeſſion and prejudice. Neither is it true

again,

again, ſecondly, that by ſuch a ſuppoſition, being juſtly argued from, Mr. Locke either was or could be led into the miſtake above ſuppoſed, or into any miſtake whatſoever; the notion itſelf, as a not uncommon one among the firſt Chriſtians, being very plain in the Scriptures, and very properly brought forward and applied by Mr. Locke upon this occaſion: as may perhaps be in part argued further, from the more flat, and leſs exact and deciſive interpretation which this writer has himſelf propoſed, owing to the neglect only, as it ſhould ſeem, of this principle.——Of his obſervation, concerning the needleſsneſs of aſſigning immortal bodies to the wicked, I acknowledge the propriety; and to what is ſaid of the Spirit, as a pledge, &c. preſume not to object, though perhaps in him and others upon this ſubject, wiſhing for more explicitneſs and certainty*.

And

* Some in ſpeaking of the day of Pentecoſt in Acts ii. tell us, there was a giving or pouring out both of gifts and graces; and by the ſame denomination of perſons we are not unfrequently told of the ſupernatural gifts of the Spirit, ſuppoſed to have been peculiar to the firſt ages, and of his ſtill remaining and more ſecret influences; and to theſe latter, as well as to the former, Dr. Taylor in his interpretation ſeems to have ſome reference; while Mr. Locke did probably acknowledge the former only: And as ſeems to me, both here, and in every other place where the Spirit is ſpoken of as an earneſt, pledge, or firſt-fruits, (as in Epheſ. i. 13, 14, with which compare Acts xix.) with the better reaſon. For how could any thing be ſuch an earneſt or pledge, either in reſpect of themſelves or others, which was not in ſome degree of a viſible nature, and more or leſs a matter of notoriety? But how it may be ſaid, could

And now to obſerve the needleſs and almoſt willful and blameable embarraſſment upon this text of

merely miraculous gifts, which ſome paſſages ſeem to ſuppoſe a wicked perſon may be inveſted with, be any proper pledge of a ſtate of acceptance, &c.? Anſwer. They were certainly ſo to every perſon who was ſincere in the profeſſion of that religious ſyſtem to which they belonged, and made a part of; which was all that could be reaſonably deſired, and was neceſſary. Neither is this other objection more ſolid, that of theſe ſupernatural gifts or powers even all the believers were not probably partakers. For they were meant for the good and edification of the whole body, whoever might be the perſonal holders or receivers of them, and were equally concluſive, and in the ſame degree ſo, to all who were profeſſors of the ſame faith and principles. And hence perhaps we may explain, Tit. iii. 6. "Which he *ſhed* on us abundantly," (as alſo Rom. v. 5, and ſome other places) though St. Paul alone, or ſome few only, had been the perſonal receivers.

Let none from hence infer that I mean to deny the *Doctrine*, as ſome have called it, *of Divine Influences*, meaning thereby the ſuppoſed Chriſtian Doctrine of the *Influences of the Holy Ghoſt or Spirit*; for I can truly ſay I do not; though I confeſs I could wiſh to ſee it brought forward and explained upon clearer Scriptural Grounds, and to ſome higher degree of ſatisfaction. Many of the texts commonly quoted in this view will no doubt be more juſtly explained by this laſt mentioned principle, and in many others the Spirit does probably mean the Goſpel, as a diſpenſation of the Spirit, or as being a ſpiritual diſpenſation, in oppoſition to the Law, which was of a more carnal and worldly nature. But I ſay not that this is the caſe univerſally. May not being born of the Spirit in John iii. ſignify the being ſo born, or ſpiritually and religiouſly, as being born of the fleſh does certainly ſignify being born carnally, or in the fleſhly way and manner? It is curious to obſerve in Rom. viii. 1—16, how many times this word Spirit occurs, and with what little preciſion and unity of idea, ſo far as any commentator has been yet

of Whitby and Doddridge may perhaps to ſome be not incurious. " I confeſs it is difficult," ſays the former in his notes, " to give the clear ſenſe of the " Apoſtle's words, from ver. 1, to ver. 9; but to " do my endeavour further towards it [he has been before endeavouring at it in the paraphraſe] " ob- " ſerve, 1ſt,—2dly,—3dly,—&c." I omit to quote what is ſaid under each, becauſe it is ſo plain to be ſeen that he himſelf was not ſatisfied. And to much the ſame unſatisfactory purpoſe ſays the latter, in his note upon verſe 1ſt. " Whether we conſider " this Divine building, as particularly ſignifying " *the body after the Reſurrection*, in which ſenſe " Dr. Whitby takes it, or any *vehicle* in which " the ſoul may be clothed during the intermediate " ſtate, conſiderable difficulties will ariſe."——And afterwards in his note upon verſe 4th, " The ex- " preſſion in theſe and the following verſes is not " perfectly diſtinct; but the meaning *ſeems* to be," ——what the reader may there ſee, if he pleaſes. The true account of the matter ſeems to be, that neither of theſe two pious and popular perſons could be willing, for whatever reaſons they were averſe from it, that the meaning of the place ſhould be what it is, and have accordingly embarraſſed both

yet able to aſcertain. " I obſerve," ſaid a worthy member of the Church of England once to the writer of theſe papers, " a remarkable loſs and want of ideas among you preachers " when you talk about the Spirit: In ſpeaking of God the " Father, and Jeſus Chriſt his only Son our Lord, you ſeem to " ſay ſomething; but when you proceed to the Spirit, the want " of determinate ideas is in general obſervable."

themſelves and their readers. " In all inquiries " after truth, ſays a celebrated writer, it is almoſt " every thing to be once in the right road." Of the truth of this, and infelicity of the contrary, have we not in theſe inſtances ſome little illuſtration?

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

On the Inſpiration of the New Teſtament.

TO thoſe who having already no ſettled ſyſtem to ſupport, can be willing to begin an enquiry into this ſubject, and let it iſſue as it may, I know not whether any paſſage will be found more ſuitable to begin with than that which is introductory to the Goſpel of St. Luke; in which that Evangeliſt lays open to us, all at once, his deſign in writing, and the nature of that ability and furniture which he appeared to himſelf at leaſt to bring with him to his work. This therefore I ſhall firſt conſider, and afterwards any other paſſages relating to the ſubject, which may ſeem to be neceſſary.

Foraſmuch as many have taken in hand, or have undertaken, *to ſet forth in order a declaration*, or compoſe a narrative, *of thoſe things which are moſt ſurely believed amongſt us*, or of which we have the moſt full aſſurance or perſuaſion;—— ſee in illuſtration, Rom. iv. 21. chap. xiv. 5. Coloſſ. ii. 2. 1 Theſſ. i. 5. Heb. vi. 11. chap. x. 22, where the ſame word is uſed:---*Even as they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witneſſes and miniſters of the word*: Under theſe circumſtances, *It ſeemed good unto me alſo, having had perfect underſtanding of all things from the very firſt*, meaning no doubt by

the means of theſe eye-witneſſes and firſt miniſters, and the accuracy and fulneſs of their informations; *to write unto thee in order*, or, according to the dependance and connection of the facts one upon the other *, *moſt excellent Theophilus. That thou mighteſt know the certainty*, literally, the immovability, *of thoſe things wherein thou haſt been inſtructed*, and how impoſſible it is that ſuch foundations ſhould be ſhaken.

We may obſerve here in the firſt place, the firmneſs at leaſt of St. Luke's own faith, as grounded upon the evidence which is here referred to, and the fulneſs and entireneſs of his own conviction, that he had not been miſled, and could not be miſtaken. He had not himſelf, it ſeems, been one of the eye-witneſſes and firſt miniſters of the word: not one of the ſeventy, whom our Lord ſent out in the early part of his miniſtry; as ſeems to be inferrible from the account which he has here given of himſelf; nor even one of the early Jewiſh Chriſtians, of whom many may be ſuppoſed to have ſeen Jeſus Chriſt: but moſt probably a later, and, as an ingenious author † has inferred, from comparing Coloſſ. iv. verſes the eleventh and fourteenth together, a Gentile rather

* This I ſuppoſe to be the peculiar force of the word καθεξης in this place, as it alſo is in Acts xi. 4. xviii. 23; and that ſomething more of order is intended by it than what merely belongs to every narrative as ſuch. And accordingly we may obſerve that ver. 1ſt, which refers to that order only, has it not.

† *Key to the New Teſtament*, p. 69, by Dr. Percy, now Lord Biſhop of Dromore.

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than a Jewiſh Chriſtian. He had however, as it ſhould ſeem, no doubts, notwithſtanding theſe circumſtances of abatement; ſo full we are to ſuppoſe and ſatisfactory were the accounts which he had received from theſe eye-witneſſes and firſt miniſters, and the anſwers returned by them to his inquiries *. The conſequence of which was, his ſeeming to himſelf to be ſufficiently well qualified, and even better than ſome others were who had undertaken it, to write a Goſpel. Which he accordingly here proceeds to do, inſcribing it to ſome unknown Chriſtian friend or pupil, whom he calls Theophilus.

His more particular inducement for doing ſo, is the next point to be conſidered. Of thoſe who had undertaken it before him, the accounts, it ſeems, were not altogether to his mind. It is obſervable, however, that he has not cenſured them with any great ſeverity; he is as far from blaming them with much ſeverity on the one hand, as he is from giving them his entire approbation on the other. And from hence, and the mention which he has made of his own deſign in writing, and peculiar qualification for it above them, as he ſuppoſes, we may ſufficiently infer, unleſs I am miſtaken, the more particular nature of his objection to theſe preceding undertakings, and the view in which he meant at leaſt that his own ſhould go beyond them. *Foraſmuch*, he ſays,

* *Having had perfect underſtanding of all things from the very firſt.* "Having accurately traced them up to their ſource," ſay ſome; perhaps not improperly.

the means of theſe eye-witneſſes and firſt miniſters, and the accuracy and fulneſs of their informations; *to write unto thee in order*, or, according to the dependance and connection of the facts one upon the other *, *moſt excellent Theophilus. That thou mighteſt know the certainty*, literally, the immovability, *of thoſe things wherein thou haſt been inſtructed*, and how impoſſible it is that ſuch foundations ſhould be ſhaken.

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as many have taken in hand to ſet forth in order a declaration, &c.—*Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witneſſes and miniſters of the word:* (in which paſſage I conceive him to be denying theſe characters of thoſe undertakers, as well as of himſelf, and to imply, that in this inſtance both they and himſelf ſtood upon the ſame equal ground, that is, had neither of them been eye-witneſſes and firſt miniſters: for otherwiſe, he would, I conceive, have ſpoken of them ſomewhat more reſpectfully:) —*It ſeemed good unto me alſo, having had perfect underſtanding of all things from the very firſt, to write unto thee,* καθεξης, *according to the order*, and relation and dependance of the facts, *moſt excellent Theophilus. That thou mighteſt know the certainty*, or immovability, &c.; plainly meaning, a higher degree of this than he could ſo eaſily attain to by their narratives. It ſhould ſeem then, as if St. Luke had not had originally any deſign of writing a Goſpel, and might not probably have done ſo, but for ſome imperfection or deficiency or other which he obſerved in theſe narratives; and when in the view and hope of ſupplying theſe imperfections or defects, he does ſo particularly refer to the matter of order, and mention with ſuch peculiar emphaſis his own *perfect underſtanding of all things*, or retracement of them up, *to the very firſt*, we cannot ſurely be much wrong in the ſuppoſition, that it muſt have been chiefly in the want of ſuch original and accurate information, received with care and preciſion from ſuch eye-

eye-witneſſes and firſt miniſters, and detailed afterwards with good arrangement and regularity in the narrative, that his objection conſiſted; and that in this only or chiefly he propoſed and hoped to go beyond them. And when, after ſuch general and only ſlight cenſure of the undertakings of theſe others (for I perceive no charge againſt them of very blameable ignorance, or wilful miſrepreſentation, or corruption whatſoever) he goes on to ſay concerning himſelf and his own undertaking, *It ſeemed good unto me alſo*, he ſeems, to me at leaſt, not to claim for himſelf above them any other and higher kind of authority than what Theophilus and his other readers ſhould ſuppoſe muſt be due to the profeſſions which he made of having taken greater pains to inform himſelf, and of meaning at leaſt to be more accurate. By which however I do not mean to ſay, that there was not, or might not be, both in his caſe and theirs, ſomething more of inſpiration and of ſupernatural aſſiſtance, &c. than all this may ſeem to amount to; but this only, that nothing of this kind is aſſerted, nor any ſuch authority, as might ſeem to belong to it, aſſumed, and that of any thing of this ſort St. Luke does not appear, by the words he uſes, to be conſcious.

But I ſhall be told, perhaps, that St. Luke was not an Apoſtle, like St. Matthew and St. John, and may therefore be granted not to have been poſſibly ſo much inſpired as they were. I would aſk then, appealing to what may ſeem to have been the matter of fact only for the preſent, whether in the

the reading of his goſpel we perceive any viſible inferiority of it to theirs, in reſpect of facts, doctrines, or any other kind of internal credibility, authenticity, or excellency whatſoever? or whether again, any of the moſt celebrated doctors and teachers of the church were ever known, having obſerved this, to adviſe the people of their reſpective charges to be upon their guard in the reading of this goſpel only? And if neither of theſe two things are affirmed, as I ſuppoſe neither of them will, I do not ſee, for my own part, any great reaſonableneſs or propriety in ſo diſtinguiſhing between them, and for aſſigning to any other Evangeliſt, upon the ground of experience and matter of fact only, any other and higher kind of aſſiſtance and inſpiration? And if not to the Evangeliſts, whoſe goſpels do certainly contain the firſt and fundamental principles of Chriſtianity, then certainly not (unleſs ſome other evidence ſhall hereafter diſcloſe itſelf) to the writers of the epiſtles, which were perhaps more occaſionally written, upon leſs catholic and univerſal principles and views, and are not, I apprehend, deemed of quite equal importance and authority, by ſcarcely any denomination of Chriſtians *.

So the argument would ſeem to be, had St. Luke been the writer of a goſpel only. But when to this is added, that he was the author of the book of the *Acts*, it improves upon us greatly. For

* The very expreſſive and becoming manner in which this is ſignified in the church of England, by ſtanding up while the goſpels are read, and not the epiſtles, can be ſcarcely unknown to any readers.

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who has not obſerved the peculiar character and importance of that book, and the diſtinction which it may ſeem to deſerve above almoſt every other of the ſeveral books of the New Teſtament? as being the only one of its kind; and that too of ſuch a kind as, without which, the reſt would ſeem to have neither key nor conſiſtency? giving to the goſpels their moſt proper finiſh, and to the epiſtles a very neceſſary opening, and being in almoſt every view, whether of facts, doctrine, or diſcipline, of ſo much importance, that we do not eaſily conceive how the Chriſtian church could have well been without it, or of any other which would not have been better ſpared, in caſe ſome one muſt have been ſo? And how then can we fail to think otherwiſe than very highly of the writer of it? or ſuppoſe in the other writers of the New Teſtament any other and higher degrees of ſupernatural aſſiſtance, &c.; whoſe works, if this account be true, can be ſcarcely ſaid to be of quite ſo much importance?

But to omit for the preſent any further proſecution of this argument, and deduce from what has been before us already ſome uſeful concluſion; I aſk, whether we may not collect from it, in the firſt place, a ſatisfactory anſwer to this queſtion, which has been often agitated, viz. Whether St. Luke, when he wrote his goſpel, had any knowlege of the three other which we now have, and reference to them, in the words, *Foraſmuch as many have taken in hand*, &c.? Which muſt, I think, be determined in the negative: inaſmuch as St. Luke, though he ſays nothing to the very great diſparage-

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ment of thoſe takers in hand, does not however ſpeak of them with ſuch reſpect, and even deference, as one cannot but think he would have ſpoken, had St. Matthew or St. John for inſtance, who had been eye-witneſſes and firſt miniſters, that is, their goſpels, been before him. Or rather, may I not ſay, that in ſuch a caſe he could not, in conſiſtency with his avowed deſign and principle, as mentioned in his preface, have undertaken ſuch a work; there not exiſting, as we are now to ſuppoſe, ſuch defectiveneſs and want of order and of accurate information, as St. Luke ſeems to refer to, but rather the contrary; and for the ſupply of which only, and not becauſe of any independant and original purpoſe which he had ever had, he was induced to write a goſpel. Neither, I think, can it be right to ſay, he might have knowledge of them without meaning to include them amongſt theſe more feeble takers in hand. He could not, I conceive, have expreſſed himſelf as he does, had he but known of any goſpel or goſpels which had been written by perſons whom he ſeems to have ſo much reverenced, and been himſelf ſo willing to learn of, as thoſe firſt miniſters and eye-witneſſes. With ſo much reverence for them, how could he preſume to equal, and ſtill leſs to excel them?

From the ſame premiſes ſhall we not be juſtified in inferring, ſecondly, that in the harmonizing, or reading and comparing together of the goſpels, we cannot be always certain that St. Luke's order and arrangement is to be preferred and followed, however he may have had in view this ſpecies of excel-

lency more particularly? our other Evangeliſts not being, as it ſhould ſeem, the writers whom he wiſhed to go beyond in this way, but certain other, and as we have reaſon to believe, much leſs able undertakers. And accordingly it may be obſerved, that divers of the commentators of no mean eſtimation for judgement in the matters of this kind, have often departed from St. Luke's arrangement, and have rather choſen to follow the order in ſome inſtances of the other Evangeliſts; which ſeems to be a proof, that he either had not theſe other before him, or, in caſe he had, that he has not ſo obviouſly and ſtrikingly excelled them as, from his propoſal in his outſet, might have been expected.

I may now, perhaps, having mentioned the buſineſs *of harmonizing*, be permitted to ſubjoin ſome few remarks not quite irrelative to that ſubject, nor to the general deſign of theſe papers; to which nothing is quite foreign and impertinent, ſave what has no relation whatſoever to Jeſus Chriſt and his goſpel.

"You inquire," ſays Dr. Lardner, in a letter with which he favoured me; it is now many years ago; "concerning the beſt Harmonie. I think Le "Clerc's the beſt. And Dr. Doddridge agrees with "that in the main, as does alſo the quarto Har- "monie, ſometimes called Mr. Locke's, or Lady "Maſham's. But I think the ſtudy of Harmonies "of little importance; indeed, almoſt vain, and "fruitleſs: for every Chriſtian can carry on our "Saviour's hiſtorie in the order of time, as to the "main parts. And on difficult, doubtful points,

"the

" the Harmonies are ſeldom right, but wrong, and " miſlead men. Macknight is a good commenta- " tor: and would have been better, if he had not " been an Harmonizer. His Harmonie is per- " plexed, and intricate, to the laſt degree."——

So ſays Dr. Lardner, " The Harmonies are ſel- " dom right," &c. And who can much wonder if they are not, conſidering what ſort of hiſtories, or rather detached paſſages and broken parts of a hiſtory the four goſpels are, from whence they are taken? From theſe to conceive the deſign of repreſenting to us the life of Jeſus in full and regular proportion, were it not as if a man, being in poſſeſſion of ſome few fragments and pieces only of a veſſel or houſe, ſhould propoſe to ſet before us a complete model of the ſtructures?

According to Doddridge the ſenſe of the queſtion in Acts xvii. 18. may be given thus, *What will this retailer of ſcraps ſay?* If, inſtead of retailer, the worthy tranſlator had ſubſtituted *collector* or *gatherer*, which is equally agreeable, I ſuppoſe, to the original, and comes to much the ſame at laſt, (he who is a retailer having been firſt probably a gatherer with that view) and, inſtead of ſcraps, given us ſome ſuch more creditable word as *hints* or *anecdotes*, &c. I would aſk, whether the paſſage, when ſo underſtood, would not be a tolerable repreſentation to us of the manner in which St. Luke and the other Evangeliſts did probably proceed, in part at leaſt, in the collecting together and arrangement of the materials of their goſpels? Of this, I think, we have ſome preſumptive proof, and a

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remarkable inſtance for illuſtration, in another paſſage in this book, chap. xx. 35. in which we obſerve a very valuable aphoriſm of our Saviour's to be mentioned by St. Paul in his preaching, and by St. Luke committed to writing, not upon the ſtrength, and by the authority, as it ſhould ſeem, of any ſuppoſed inſpiration or ſuggeſtion of the ſupernatural kind, either in the one or the other; but upon the ground only, ſo far as appears, of an uncontradicted acknowlegement and reception as ſuch amongſt the brethren. Neither have I much doubt that in theſe firſt, ſimple, and ſincere, but, as it ſeems, defective undertakings or narratives which St. Luke in his preface refers to, there was probably much good matter of this nature, of which he would probably avail himſelf; for why not, ſo far as he found this to be the caſe? and that in this way perhaps, as well as in others, the materials of the goſpels and of the book of the Acts * were gradually collected, and from time to time brought together, and at length diſpoſed and arranged by apoſtles and apoſtolic men into that ſtate and form in which we now have them. And if this gives, and ſecures to them, ſufficiently high degrees of practical importance and authority, as I truſt and hope it does; (for what other hiſtory can be ſaid to have more, or even quite ſo much?) it may be granted perhaps to have this peculiar advantage in

* This applies to the book of the Acts only in part. St. Luke, as appears from chap. xvi. 10. having now joined St. Paul, and being probably, of all that he relates from this time, a firſt miniſter and eye-witneſs.

it

it above almoſt every other hypotheſis, of leaving to us, in the reading, ſuch a latitude of interpretation, and more eſpecially when paſſages in the Old Teſtament are quoted and applied with either more or leſs exactneſs in the New, as thoſe who have moſt ſtudied the ſubject do perhaps moſt know the value of; while ſtill the foundation, as laid in facts, and in principles inſeparable from them, may have all the immovability upon the whole which St. Luke ſpeaks of *.

In this manner I have been wont to conceive of the four goſpels in general. To which I would ſubjoin further, ſome few miſcellaneous obſervations, upon St. Matthew's more particularly. It is known to be attended with difficulties to which the other

* Another advantage of it may perhaps be reckoned this; The eaſy way in which it ſeems to account for that ſameneſs in ſome of the paſſages of two or more of the Evangeliſts from whence ſome have argued, (Dr. Owen more particularly, in his *Obſervations on the Four Goſpels*) that the one had not only ſeen, but even *tranſcribed* the other; which others have thought, as tending to leſſen the weight of their teſtimony as independent witneſſes, ſhould not be haſtily admitted. To me it ſeems not improbable, that ſome principal paſſages and parables of Jeſus, &c. might be delivered and received amongſt the firſt Chriſtians, a plain, ſimple, artleſs people, in much the ſame words, and with little or no variation; to which perhaps the reverence in which they held them, might very much contribute. For it is levity, and not ſimplicity, which moſt affects variety. And why then not ſuppoſe, that the writers of the goſpels would prefer what came ſo recommended, to oſtentatious and conceited variety and novelty? See John xx. 30, 31. in illuſtration.

goſpels

goſpels are not in the ſame degree liable. Whether, for inſtance, we now have it in the language in which it was at firſt written, or a tranſlation of it only, may be queſtioned: for the early Chriſtian writers are ſaid to be unanimous in the aſſertion, that it was firſt written in Hebrew, (ſuch Hebrew as was then in uſe among the Jews) and for the almoſt ſole uſe of the early Jewiſh Chriſtians. And though divers able writers, more eſpecially of late, ſeem inclined to ſuppoſe that this may poſſibly be a notion rather haſtily aſſumed, (upon the miſtaken ground that the early Jewiſh Chriſtians would be ſoon in want of a goſpel, and that a goſpel written for them would be moſt probably written in their vernacular language;) than as having any poſitive evidence; the rather, as it does not appear that theſe early Chriſtian writers had ever ſeen it in that language, or that there is any thing peculiar to the Jewiſh Chriſtians in it; ſtill it cannot however be denied, that the mere aſſertion of this by early Chriſtian writers ſo generally, and the poſſibility at leaſt that we may only have a tranſlation of it into Greek, does rather take from, than add any thing to its authenticity. Unleſs we will ſuppoſe, what in ſuch a caſe I ſhould be inclined to ſuppoſe, that the Evangeliſt himſelf muſt have been the tranſlator of it; much in the ſame manner as Joſephus tells us, in the preface to his hiſtory of the Jewiſh war, that he at firſt wrote it in the Hebrew language for the like uſe of his own people, and did afterwards tranſlate it into the Greek, that it might become by this means ſo much the more uſeful. And to

this notion the two following conſiderations may, I think, the more reaſonably incline us; firſt, that if the original writer was not the tranſlator, we know not of any other to whom this honour ſhould be given; no one having yet claimed it, or been mentioned as a candidate for it, that I know of; and, ſecondly, that in the reading we do not obſerve any thing unſuitable to the character of an original and firſt work, and more particularly of that looſe, verboſe, and paraphraſtic turn, by which unauthorized tranſlations, (meaning by that term now ſuch as are not made or ſanctioned by the authors themſelves,) are not uncommonly diſtinguiſhed.

But admitting that in this way we might diſpoſe of this firſt, as I hope we may; there will ſtill remain other difficulties, or however peculiarities. To ſay nothing of the genealogy in the firſt chapter, the ſtory of the wiſe men coming from the Eaſt, as related in the ſecond, has always ſeemed to me inexplicable. The ſermon on the mountain in the fifth, ſixth, and ſeventh, I believe, with Lardner *, to

* "I do not ſuppoſe," ſays this writer, in his Credibility, Part II. chap. 36. "that our Lord ever ſpake at one time all "thoſe diſcourſes the ſubſtance of which is recorded, Matthew "v. vi. vii. But St. Matthew thought fit to place near the "beginning of his goſpel a ſummary of our Lord's doctrine "delivered by him at divers times, and in divers places. The "particular occaſions, times, and places, of many things "recorded in thoſe chapters of St. Matthew, may be found "in St. Luke's goſpel. A large part of our Lord's ſermon "on the mountain, as it is called, recorded by St. Matthew, "is the ſame with that in Luke, vi. 20—49. The occaſion "of the Lord's prayer is given in Luke xi. 1.——. The time "and

to be, for the larger part, a collection of paſſages delivered by Jeſus at divers times, and upon ſeveral occaſions, and to be now for the firſt time perhaps, a convenient place and opportunity in the hiſtory occurring, brought together. And ſo alſo perhaps may the admonitions given to the twelve in chap. x. the large aſſemblage of parables in chap. xiii. and the long diſcourſe of Jeſus in chap. xxiv. xxv. occaſioned by his view of the temple, as mentioned in the firſt verſe of the former, be beſt conceived of; and the diſcourſe of conſequence to be that of the Evangeliſt in part, as well as of Jeſus. In the reading alſo of the eighteenth chapter I have ſometimes aſked myſelf, whether there is not, in the fifteenth and following verſes, ſuch a reference to ſomething like church diſcipline and order, as may ſeem to ſuit a later time than that in which Jeſus is repreſented to be ſpeaking the words, full as well, and perhaps better. And though I do not mean very ſeriouſly to call into queſtion the authority of the preſcribed form of words to be uſed in the admini-

" and occaſion of our Lord's delivering the arguments againſt " the love of riches, and againſt ſolicitude, which are recorded " in Matthew vi. 19—34. are to be ſought in Luke xii. " 13—34. where are the ſame precepts and arguments, and " the occaſion of them. The like may be ſaid of ſome other " matters in thoſe three chapters of Matthew. And the finding of ſo many parts of the diſcourſe which we have in that " Evangeliſt, recorded again in St. Luke's goſpel at ſeveral " times, greatly confirms the ſuppoſition that, all that long " diſcourſe called our Saviour's ſermon on the mountain, was " not delivered at one and the ſame time."——It ſeems to do ſo, and much alſo to confirm the ſuppoſition of St. Luke's accuracy, and, perhaps, priority in time, &c.

ſtration of baptiſm, in chap. xxviii. 19. nor the indiſpenſible neceſſity, as ſome may think, of uſing them; yet when I conſider on the other hand, that nothing of this peculiar and ſyſtematic kind, if I may be allowed ſo to ſpeak, has been yet before us in this goſpel, and that in the Acts we ſeem to have abundant proof that the Apoſtles did only baptize in the name of Jeſus, or did ſuppoſe however that this took in the whole of what was intended, I confeſs I have ſometimes had my doubts, whether the words, as at firſt ſpoken by Jeſus, were ſuch exactly as we now have them, without any addition afterwards, or variation. By which however I would not be underſtood to recommend any very haſty and confident departure from them, in the adminiſtration of the ordinance of baptiſm, on the one hand, nor yet to cenſure ſuch a departure very ſeverely on the other; ſhould any chooſe to perform the duty, or have it performed, in the name of Jeſus only.

In all theſe remarks there may be thought, perhaps, to be little weight or ſolidity. So far as there ſhall be allowed to be any, it will go to the proof, it is apprehended, rather of a late than early compoſition of St. Matthew's goſpel; in which view chiefly they are mentioned. St. Luke's perchance might be the firſt, and St. John's very probably the laſt: St. Matthew's and St. Mark's might perhaps be compoſed at ſome unknown times between; the former more particularly for the Chriſtians in Judæa, and the latter for thoſe at Rome; if an ancient tradition, not much ſupported by any internal evidence, is to be credited.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VIII.

Other Obſervations upon Inſpiration.—The Deſign and Doctrines of Chriſtianity.

BY thoſe who have read the foregoing argument upon Inſpiration, it may poſſibly have been obſerved, that no notice has been taken in it of thoſe paſſages in the New Teſtament, in the Goſpel of St. John, and Epiſtles of St. Paul, more eſpecially, in which ſomething of this ſort, much more, it may be ſaid, than has yet been allowed, ſeems to be promiſed or aſſerted; nor any proviſion made in it for the authenticity of ſuch of our Saviour's diſcourſes as are of conſiderable length, and which cannot be ſuppoſed to have been committed to writing under circumſtances of ſufficient credibility, by the ſtrength of memory only; nor more eſpecially ſtill, for the purity of the Chriſtian doctrine, and of ſuch articles and myſteries of faith, as would ſeem to require, in order to the preſervation of their proper character, as matters of Divine revelation, ſomething more than has yet been granted.

To the former of theſe objections I have to reply, that my purpoſe was to conſider the queſtion concerning Inſpiration, as a queſtion concerning a matter of fact principally, and to judge of it by ſuch rules as ſuch a notion of it ſhould ſuggeſt, rather than as a queſtion to be determined only or chiefly by authority.—"I would not" ſaid a reſpectable judge and friend, with whom the ſubject was talked over in converſation, "ſo much conſider what is

" ſaid, as what the fact, judging of it from what " we read in the Scriptures, ſeems to have been: " I would conſider it as a queſtion concerning a " matter of fact principally." To this, I think I have been attentive; and may now perhaps be allowed to ſubjoin further, that until the abſolute and plenary inſpiration of the New Teſtament is acknowledged, the very paſſages in queſtion need not be taken perhaps in their fulleſt and moſt literal ſenſe, but rather with ſome abatement or allowance, and as not having, till this be proved, the very higheſt authority.

So I am diſpoſed to reply to the firſt, which may be alſo conſidered as an anſwer in part to the ſecond objection. To which however may be added in this view further, the conſideration, if allowed, of what has been before obſerved, of the manner in which St. Matthew at leaſt did moſt probably collect, and bring into one view, (and if he, why not the other Evangeliſts?) ſuch of our Saviour's diſcourſes, as were ſpoken perhaps, not all at once, and are not now perhaps given us preciſely in his firſt words; which will take away, if I am not miſtaken, much of the objection. Indeed that the four Evangeliſts, who were themſelves the companions of Jeſus, or of ſuch others as had been ſo, may have given us ſuch diſcourſes for his as they remembered in part, knew to be conformable to his general doctrine, and conceived to be ſuitable to the ſuppoſed ſituation and circumſtances; much in the ſame manner as Thucydides, Livy, and others, have given to us the ſpeeches and converſations of ſome of the great men of antiquity; has ſeemed to me not wholly improbable;

probable; and, if admitted, muſt prevent our expectation of ſuch an abſolute exactneſs as is ſuppoſed in the objection. And of ſuch a manner of proceeding in the Evangelical writers, I am miſtaken, if the New Teſtament does not afford very clear inſtances.*

But to this other objection, the hazard, I mean, to which in this way we ſeem to expoſe the myſteries and pure truths of revelation, I feel a diſpoſition to be more particular in replying; and with this view ſhall now go on to enquire, whether the doctrines of the New Teſtament are indeed of ſuch a difficult and abſtract nature, as to need ſuch preciſeneſs in the delivery; or the notion be not rather founded in the metaphyſical ſyſtems of modern men, and of ſuch a kind, as an inquiry into the genuine and firſt principles of the Chriſtian religion would probably ſet aſide; by ſhewing them to be of ſuch a ſort, as that the ſame ſimplicity and integrity, which were competent to the delivery of the facts, were not leſs ſo to the underſtanding and delivery of the like ſimple and plain doctrines?

* When two or more Evangeliſts aſcribe to Jeſus, evidently at the ſame time, and under the ſame circumſtances, not only different words, but ſome diverſity of ſentiment, muſt not the exactneſs in queſtion be given up in theſe inſtances? But what I now more eſpecially refer to, are thoſe ſeveral ſpeeches given by St. Luke to St. Paul, in his book of the Acts; more eſpecially in ſome of the latter chapters; and which ſeem, in reſpect of ſimplicity, perſpicuity, and order, to be ſo very different from the ſame Apoſtle's manner in his Epiſtles. That the leading ideas, as at firſt delivered, are preſerved, I doubt not; nor again, that the language and arrangement are St. Luke's principally.

With this view I ſhall recite divers paſſages of the New Teſtament, which have ſometimes appeared to me, to have been written, as it were, with the expreſs deſign of informing us, by a few words, and in a ſort of ſyſtematic way, in the leading and firſt principles of Chriſtianity; or which may however, whether ſo deſigned or not, be very properly brought forward with ſuch a view. They occur in the Goſpels and Epiſtles both. I ſhall begin with the former, not only as being the firſt in the order of time moſt probably, but as being alſo, as appears to me, of the higheſt order and authority; and amongſt theſe with that which Jeſus himſelf began with, according to St. Mark.

Mark i. 14, 15, *Now after that John was put in priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom of God, And ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.* To preach the *good news* then, as the word Goſpel is ſaid to mean, of the approaching kingdom of God, and *repentance* and *faith* as the preliminary or eſſential matters of it, (we need not at preſent to be more determinate) was in the view of Jeſus, and of this Evangeliſt alſo, to preach the Goſpel. And therefore, by obſerving the more particular nature and meaning of theſe things, if any other paſſages ſhall hereafter unfold them, we ſhall underſtand the Goſpel, and the doctrines of it in proportion.

Luke xxiv. 45, &c. *Then opened he their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the Scriptures; And ſaid unto them, Thus it is written, and*

thus

thus it behoved the Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins; the one as the condition, and the other as the bleſſing promiſed to it, (for it is not eaſy to conceive of any other meaning) *ſhould be preached in his name*, or, as by authority of him, *among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem. And ye are witneſſes*, the witneſſes by way of eminence, *of theſe things.*

Much light is here thrown, I conceive, upon the nature of that repentance which has been mentioned in the foregoing paſſage. The repentance, we ſee, is in order to the remiſſion of ſins; and when repentance, with ſuch a view, is ordered to be preached in all nations, in the name of Jeſus, we are further inſtructed in the more particular nature and importance of it, as a part or doctrine of his Goſpel. To repent is always better than not to repent, in any circumſtances, and whatever may be the conſequence. But that repentance ſhall be uniformly, and always followed by the remiſſion of ſins, in every caſe, and without any exception whatſoever, is no indication or dictate of natural light or reaſon that I know of; and was never, I believe, by any of the heathen writers, before the time of Jeſus, ſo ſpoken of. To this end it could only be preached with good effect by perſons having a ſufficiently competent and high authority; which we may obſerve Jeſus in this paſſage to ſuppoſe himſelf to be giving; and which ſhews the ſuperior place and importance of it, and its eſſential difference from any thing of the kind to be elſewhere met with, as a doctrine of his Goſ-

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pel. I am alſo miſtaken, if we have not in this paſſage ſome little light thrown upon the neceſſity, place, and importance of that believing or faith, which has been before mentioned. For to what end is repentance, as a term of remiſſion, preached in the name of Jeſus, unleſs there be in the mind of the hearer ſome principle of correſpondence, ſome ſuch yielding and admitting principle? See in this view Rom. i. 17, and again, in chap. x. 14-17, what may be reckoned a fine commentary.

Acts x. verſe the 31ſt and following. *Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth and ſaid, Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him. The word* then (what is gone before being prefatory only) *which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt (he is Lord of all), That word ye know;* I may reaſonably take for granted ye have ſome general knowledge of it, and cannot need to be now, for the firſt time, informed in every particular relating to it; *which was publiſhed throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptiſm which John preached;* and of which ye may perhaps recollect, and if not, may be now for the firſt time informed, that theſe were the chief articles viz. *How God had anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the Devil; for God was with him.*

him. And we are witneſſes of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jeruſalem; whom they ſlew, and hanged on a tree: Him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witneſſes, choſen before of God, even unto us, who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify, that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witneſs, that through his name, meaning, I ſuppoſe, faith in his name, or in him, (as the next words explain) *whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive the remiſſion of ſins*. So I ſuppoſe the phraſe, *through his name*, may only ſignify; partly becauſe of the plainneſs and perſpicuity of the whole paſſage in general, and becauſe that any thing more abſtruſe and remote may be leaſt of all expected from ſuch a writer as St. Luke. And if ſo, we have then only here, ſomewhat more largely ſtated, and more fully brought into view, the ſame plain and great principles and facts as thoſe mentioned or referred to in the preceding paſſages; repentance and faith being here, as before, ſuppoſed to be the chief requirements, and the remiſſion of ſins the chief bleſſing of the Goſpel. Something indeed, but in the fulleſt conſiſtency with theſe, is further mentioned concerning the judgment of the quick and dead; which the following paſſage will more fully explain, and ſhew to be ſo.

Acts xvii. 30, 31. *And the times of this ignorance*, of the ancient heathen ignorance, *God winked at;*

at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Becauſe he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead. Here repentance moſt plainly, as a term of remiſſion or acquittance, in the day of the future judgement of mankind, is again evidently mentioned as the great requirement of God under the Goſpel, and receives additional importance and authority by being ſpoken of in ſuch a connection; neither again is the very awful and majeſtic manner in which all theſe ſeveral doctrines are ſuppoſed to be connected with the reſurrection of Chriſt, and to reſt upon it as a baſis or foundation, to be by any means unobſerved: it is indeed a remarkable proof and illuſtration of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God in the Chriſtian revelation, and ſome conſiderable preſumption of the certain truth of it, that ſuch a care ſhould have been taken in it to connect the principles with the facts, and in this way provide, for the moſt ſpiritual and abſtract notions, a ſort of ſenſible evidence and demonſtration. Perhaps alſo another remark may be here worth the making. To ſome perſons it has ſometimes ſeemed ſtrange, and to be no ſmall objection to the Socinian ſyſtem of theology, which ſeems to be now more prevalent than formerly, that he who is ſuppoſed to have been a man only in the firſt inſtance, ſhould become, by the Divine appointment, a God, as it were, and in the event of things not only ſo capable of ruling

over

over the church and over the world, for the church's good, as ſome other paſſages ſuppoſe; but of even judging all mankind at laſt, which this and many others ſo expreſsly teach: while contrariwiſe, that he who at firſt made the world ſhould at length judge it, would ſeem to be in ſpeculation a more conſiſtent opinion. Perhaps it may; but then what ſhall we ſay, when we here obſerve St. Luke, either not attending to this difficulty, or elſe not perceiving it, ſo calmly ſpeak of Jeſus as a man, when this, his higheſt exertion of power, and knowledge, and wiſdom are the ſubject? as he has alſo ſpoken of him in chap. ii. 22; chap. x. 38; and never, that I recollect, when only perſonally mentioned, under any higher character.—To thoſe who ſhall attentively conſider theſe particulars, it may perhaps appear likely, that St. Luke was at this time neither Arian nor Trinitarian.

Chap. xx. 17th verſe and following. *And from Miletus he ſent to Epheſus, and called for the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he ſaid unto them, Ye know, from the firſt day that I came into Aſia, after what manner I have been with you at all ſeaſons.——And how I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have ſhewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from houſe to houſe, teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And now behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jeruſalem,* &c. As if, having ſo done, he had diſcharged his whole duty, and nothing more, in the

the way of teaching, preaching, or doctrine, was incumbent upon him. Which is alſo further confirmed by what we read in the 24th verſe, in which he ſuppoſes himſelf, in ſo doing, to have *finiſhed the miniſtry which he had received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the Goſpel of the grace of God*, plainly meaning the repentance and faith before ſo ſpoken of; and by what is ſaid by him again in the 26th and 27th verſes, of his having, by ſo doing or teſtifying, *declared* in effect *the whole council of God*, and being, ſo far, *pure from the blood of all men*. And how then can we refuſe to acknowledge ſuch repentance and faith, ſo variouſly and emphatically ſpoken of, to be the only eſſential and chief things in Chriſtianity, (ſo far as the doctrines of it are concerned) and, with this knowledge of its principles, preſume to add any other to them, otherwiſe than as ſubordinate to them, and as tending only in ſome way or other to their illuſtration?

It is in this view only that I now proceed to the mention of ſome few other paſſages in the Epiſtles, of the like ſummary kind, in St. Paul's Epiſtles more eſpecially.

Rom. i. 16, 17. *For I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt: for it is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek. For therein the righteouſneſs of God by faith*, his way of making men righteous by faith, (to be more particularly illuſtrated hereafter) *is revealed to faith*, to faith in us, or to our faith, as an object or truth to be

by us received, believed in, and applied to ourſelves. It is a learned Apoſtle, the reader will obſerve, and not Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, that is here ſpeaking; and if it ſhall appear hereafter, in the next chapter more particularly, that this "righteouſneſs of God by faith," as St. Paul here expreſſes himſelf, is only another mode of expreſſing "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt," or, in the language of Chriſt himſelf, "Repentance and remiſſion of ſins," there will be then no inconſiſtency in it with what has gone before, the difference being only in the phraſeology. I therefore go on to other paſſages.

1 Cor. xv. 1, &c. *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you,* do now again do ſo, *the Goſpel which I preached unto you* formerly, *which alſo ye have received, and wherein* (I ſpeak it to your praiſe, and by way of future encouragement,) *ye have ſtood* hitherto. *By which alſo ye are ſaved,* will be ſo at laſt, *if ye adhere to what I have preached to you,* or ſhall continue to ſtand in it; *without which ye have* hitherto *believed in vain*; ſo unprofitable, in ſuch a caſe, will your paſt profeſſion be to you. *For,* to put you in mind once more of the importance of your faith, and the ſaving nature of it, if continued in, *I delivered unto you firſt of all, that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our ſins according to the Scriptures*; (ſee in illuſtration, in part at leaſt, Luke xxiv. 45, before quoted,) *And that he was buried, and that he roſe again the third day according to the Scriptures. And that he was ſeen of Cephas,* &c.——Here the

the manner of beginning is remarkable; "Moreover, "brethren, I declare unto you the Goſpel," &c. As if all that had gone before, in the fourteen preceding chapters, did ſcarcely deſerve to be ſo called, in compariſon of the ſubjects he was now entering upon, *viz.* the reſurrection of Chriſt, and in conſequence of it, and connection with it, that of Chriſtians. For theſe, we may obſerve, are the ſubjects which he does moſt enlarge upon, however Chriſt's *dying for our ſins* may have been firſt, and as it ſhould ſeem, only caſually mentioned. A circumſtance which makes me doubt, whether St. Paul, at leaſt in this place, did intend quite ſo much by it as ſome perhaps may chooſe to imagine; or mean to do ought more than refer to it hiſtorically, and as previous, and in order, to the greater ſubject of his preſent thoughts, the reſurrection, &c. The ſubject however is acknowledged to be important, and worthy of a more particular conſideration hereafter, though thus ſlightly paſſed over for the preſent. Meantime, the important light in which the Reſurrection of Chriſt is placed in this chapter, as being the baſis or ground of ſo many other truths, is exceedingly ſimilar to what we have before ſeen, upon Acts xvii. 31; and the light in this view thrown by either paſſage on the other, is not a little obſervable.

2 Cor. v. 18, 19. *And all things*, in the new creation, or diſpenſation of things under the Goſpel, as the preceding verſe ſhews the meaning to be, *are of God, who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt;* hath formed the deſign of this; and for the

more

more effectual execution of it, *hath given to us the miniſtry of reconciliation; to wit,* (this is the outline, and a brief ſummary of the ſcheme) *that God was in Chriſt,* in his perſon and miniſtry while he was upon earth, and is ſtill in his Goſpel, *reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing,* or by not imputing (which is here ſuppoſed to be the great reconciling motive or inducement: for which ſee in illuſtration, Pſ. cxxx. 3, 4. Jer. xviii. 11, 12. Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11.) *their treſpaſſes unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* Here I would aſk, ſuppoſing the Apoſtle's brief view or ſynopſis of the word or miniſtry of reconciliation, or in other words, of the Chriſtian doctrine, to be completed, as I think it is, whether all the ideas are not more favourable to the Socinian than to the Calviniſtical notion of reconciliation? it being, as it ſhould ſeem, not God, but the ſinner only, that is to be won over or reconciled; as the motive or inducement mentioned would ſeem to ſuppoſe; and nothing that is implied in this emphatical and important expreſſion, "God was in Chriſt," rendering the ſuppoſition of more than this, that I know of, neceſſary. Let us however obſerve what more, if more, the words following, and which cannot be well ſeparated from theſe in the reading, bring before us. *Now then;* this is obviouſly a recollection from what has gone before, which ſhews the ſummary or ſynopſis to be finiſhed; *we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: we pray* or beſeech *in Chriſt's ſtead,* ſaying to all to whom the providence of God

opens us a way, and gives us an opportunity of exerciſing our ambaſſy or miſſion, *Be ye reconciled to God. For*, to illuſtrate this matter a little further, and ſhew how Chriſt is firſt and principal in this deſign, and we only agents or ſubſtitutes under him; *he hath made him to be ſin for us*, that is, a ſinner as it were, cauſing him to ſuffer the pains and ſorrows of one, as to an eye of ſenſe may ſeem, *who knew no ſin* really; *that we*, in the ſame ſeeming, conſtructive, and interpretative ſenſe, *might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him*; might receive, in conſequence, as real bleſſings from God, as if we were indeed become righteous perſons. Here, I think, the laſt member of the paſſage ſhould be allowed, by all the rules of juſt criticiſm, to explain the former; and if none will affirm, as I truſt none will, that the penitent and believing ſinner is aught elſe, and can be aught elſe, than a ſinner ſtill, though a pardoned one, to all eternity; however he may enjoy as much felicity as a literally righteous perſon; the ſame perſons cannot, I think, very conſiſtently ſuppoſe Jeſus to have been made ſin, or a ſinner, for us, in any ſenſe more real. To thoſe who by ſin here chooſe to underſtand a ſin-offering, it may be obſerved, that, beſides that ſuch a ſubſtitution does not make the interpretation eaſier, it deſtroys the oppoſition which the Apoſtle moſt evidently intended between the two *makings* here mentioned, of *ſin* and *righteouſneſs*; and cannot therefore be admitted.

1 Tim. iii. 16. *And without controverſy great*, ſufficiently great to have the leading principles of it inſcribed,

ſcribed, as it were, upon ſucha pillar and ground as I have juſt now mentioned, (ſuch ſeems to be the connection of this verſe with the foregoing;) *is the myſtery of Godlineſs*, the new diſcovered doctrine * or revelation concerning godlineſs; (ſee in illuſtration, chap. vi. 3. Tit. i. 1. 2 Pet. i. 3.) *God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, or human nature of Jeſus Chriſt, was *juſtified in the Spirit*, or by his miraculous operations and works, (ſee Matt. xii. 28. Acts x. 38. Heb. ii. 3, 4, in illuſtration;) was *ſeen of angels*, as an object of aſtoniſhment, and as ſuch obſerved by them; (ſee for this particular alſo, Luke ii. 13. Epheſ. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12.) *preached unto the Gentiles*, and not to the Jews only; *believed on in the world*, and not preached in vain, and without ſucceſs in it; *received up into glory*, or, "in glory," that is, as ſome explain, in this way of being preached and believed upon, exalted gloriouſly.—So I have tranſcribed, and ventured to give the meaning of this paſſage, partly becauſe it is evidently one of the ſummary kind, referring to, or mentioning, ſome of the principal facts of the Goſpel; but for this other reaſon chiefly, that I might not ſeem, in paſſing over it, to ſhrink from the important doctrinal ſentiment, as ſome may think, with which it opens; which has with me no difficulty; for I can as eaſily explain how God was manifeſt in the fleſh, that is, in the human nature of Chriſt, as how God

* That by *myſtery* nothing more is here intended, muſt be plain, it is apprehended, to ſuch as ſhall conſider what is ſaid above upon 1 Cor. xv. 51; and alſo ſubjoin Epheſ. iii. 3—9. Coloſs. i. 25, 26, 27.

was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, and how the Father, which was with, or in him, did the works; (ſee John xiv. 10.) to which ſome other texts of the like nature might be added. I doubt however whether *God* be the true reading notwithſtanding. They who propoſe this other, "*which* was manifeſt," meaning the myſtery, or which myſtery, may be thought to have urged for it, more eſpecially, of late *, very forcible reaſons; which do not however remove from this reading, any more than the other, the charge of conſiderable harſhneſs of conſtruction, in reſpect of the context. It is indeed a ſingularity, peculiar perhaps to this text, certainly more ſo to this than to any other, that of the divers readings propoſed, no one gives, though admitted, an entirely ſatisfactory and eaſy ſenſe and

* The change of *which* into *God* (that is, of the Greek words anſwering to them) is ſuppoſed by Mr. Gibbon and Sir Iſaac Newton, by whom he profeſſes to be determined, to have been made at Conſtantinople in the beginning of the ſixth century; (more particularly by Macedonius, the biſhop of that ſee, according to ſome) when the queſtion was ſo rife in the church concerning the union of the two natures in Chriſt; and more particularly, whether it was of ſo cloſe a kind, that what belonged to one might be predicated of the other, and the virgin be ſaid to have been the mother of God, and God to have ſuffered and died, &c.——"The true reading," ſays this celebrated hiſtorian, "which is viſible in the Latin and Syriac "verſions, ſtill exiſts in the reaſoning of the Greek, as well as "the Latin Fathers; and this fraud, with that of the *three* "*witneſſes in St. John*, was admirably detected by Sir Iſaac "Newton,"——in certain Letters, which are there mentioned; the Roman Hiſtory, chap. xcvii. ſect. 4, in the notes. See alſo in Sir Iſaac Newton's works, by Bp. Horſley, vol. 5, at the end, the ſubſtance, it is ſuppoſed, of the ſame argument.

connection

connection. And if ſo, I aſk, whether that which is not more harſh upon the whole, and of which ſomething like a ſimilar inſtance may be brought, as "*he* or *who* was manifeſt," ſhould not be preferred? So, for inſtance, in 1 John iii. 2, we have *he* without its proper principal or antecedent, the meaning being ſuppoſed to be ſuch as could not be miſtaken; and the like is perhaps to be thought of *that* or *that day*, in 2 Tim. iv. 8. And in this way, I am willing to confeſs, I have been wont to explain to myſelf the *he* in Acts xx. 28; though others, perhaps, adverting to the various reading of *Lord* for *God* in ſome copies, may have their doubts, whether this text was not alſo tampered with, at the time, and upon the occaſion (the reaſon for it being equally great) which the preceding note mentions.

Titus ii. 11—15. *For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men: Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily, in this preſent world. Looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Theſe things ſpeak and exhort*, &c. Here the practical deſign of the Goſpel is more particularly ſpoken of, and ſuppoſed to be the ultimate deſign of it, and of the redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; which is alſo ſpoken of in a plain way; and what may ſeem

to be doctrinal in it, is ſuppoſed to be ſubordinate to this, and is evidently laid as the motive to, or foundation of, that ſober, righteous, and godly life, which is here ſo authoritatively recommended. Of which doctrinal part, as here referred to, or implied, ſome may think that this is ſuppoſed to be one of the particulars, that Jeſus Chriſt is God, that is, the Chriſtian's God, or a great God relative to him. To which notion, taken only in this relative ſenſe, and conſiſtently with ſuch views of the abſolute perfection and ſupremacy of the Father, as have been already before us, (in the obſervations upon John v. more eſpecially) I cannot ſay that I have any objection. And the rather, as I do not perceive the uſual gloſs of the Socinians upon the place to be more eaſy and ſcriptural; not recollecting any paſſage in the whole New Teſtament where the appearance in the laſt day is ſuppoſed to be that of the Father, but always otherwiſe; ſee more particularly in this view, 1 Tim. vi. 13—16. It is indeed true, that Jeſus will come in the glory of the Father, and clothed with his authority; but it will be the appearance of Jeſus Chriſt notwithſtanding.

Says the Apoſtle in the next chapter, ver. 4, 5, 6th, and after a deſcription of the former ſtate of corruption and wickedneſs in no ſmall degree;—*but after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration,* (ſo alſo is

baptiſm

baptiſm ſaid to ſave, as a ſign or token, in 1 Pet. iii. 21.) *and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*; ſuch a regeneration, and new ſtate of things within us, and amongſt us, (ſee before, upon 2 Cor. v. 17, 18, and add alſo, Matt. xix. 28,) as baptiſm is the ſign of, and as the Spirit may be ſaid to be the author of; *which he ſhed on us abundantly*, upon me and others, and may be ſaid, in reſpect to the ſignificancy and effect, to have done upon all that are believers, (ſee the note before upon 2 Cor. v. 5.) *through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour: That being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* That in this brief but expreſſive ſummary, St. Paul does only ſpeak of the Holy Ghoſt or Spirit, as the more immediate author or agent of the new diſpenſation, is with me, for the reaſons ſuggeſted or referred to, more eſpecially in the note, not very doubtful; and of all the reſt the plainneſs and importance, and its entire conſiſtency with all that has yet been before us; in which the hope of eternal life has never indeed been ſo expreſsly mentioned, though no doubt implied and ſuppoſed; can ſcarcely fail to be acknowledged by every reader.

Heb. i. 1, 2, 3. *God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things*, or hath made to inherit, as it were, all things, in reward of his obedience and merit; as the meaning probably is, and may hereafter more clearly appear to be: *by whom alſo*, or with reſpect to whom,

as ſome chooſe to explain the paſſage, though the other is moſt literal; *he hath made the worlds*, or more literally, the ages, that is, ages of the world, probably, and providential and religious diſpenſations. *Who being*, having been while upon earth, *the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, (ſee in illuſtration, John xiv. 9, and other like paſſages) *and upholding*, more literally, bearing *all things by the word of his power*, or having them all, while upon earth, within the reach of his miraculous power, (ſo the following paſſage, deſcribing what was ſubſequent to the miraculous works of Jeſus, inclines me to ſuppoſe may be the meaning,) *when he had by himſelf*, that is, by the offering of himſelf, and not of any ſuch inferior thing, as lamb, goat, or bullock, *purged our ſins*, or done away the guilt of them, as ſacrifices are ſuppoſed to do, (for the phraſe is certainly here ſacrifical) *ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high. Being made*, or becoming, from that time, *ſo much better than the angels*, ſuperior to them in character and dignity, *by how much he hath inherited*, or obtained by heirſhip or inheritance (as above mentioned) *a more excellent name than they*; the name of Son, and not of ſervant or meſſenger only.

It will be ſaid, I ſuppoſe, that we ſeem to have here abundant reference to what may be called doctrines of the Goſpel, in the more modern acceptation of the expreſſion. To which, if the reader ſhall ſo incline, I am not unwilling to accede. But cannot allow, that for this reaſon, alone, we ſhould depart

from the more obvious plainneſs, ſimplicity, and majeſty, in ſtyle and ſentiment, of ſuch paſſages in the Evangeliſts and Acts as have been before us, unleſs it were more certainly known who the real author of this epiſtle was; and while again it is ſo certainly known, be the author of it whoever he may, to be farther removed from plainneſs and ſimplicity, in ſtyle and thought both, than perhaps any other book of the New Teſtament, and in no ſmall degree, in ſome of the paſſages, not only difficult, but even allegorical and cabbaliſtical. Upon theſe accounts (though it is acknowledged alſo to have ſome very fine paſſages) I muſt be of opinion, that any thing found in this epiſtle only, and which is not ſuſtained and confirmed by ſomething correſpondent to it in the other and indubitably canonical books, has not, and ſhould not be allowed to have much weight, when the queſtion is concerning doctrine. Of this ſort, however, is not what is ſaid in this paſſage of the ſacrifice of the death of Chriſt; to be further noticed hereafter. And upon the ſame accounts alſo I cannot ſay that I am much diſpoſed to accede, or ever could, to the doctrine of our Saviour's pre-exiſtence, ſo far as taught, perhaps, or implied in this paſſage only; at the ſame time that I would not by any means be numbered with the deniers of that notion upon the whole; nothing very poſitive having been yet revealed to me (ſee Philip iii. 15.) upon that ſubject.

1 Peter i. 1ſt verſe and following. *Peter an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia;*

Bithynia: Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt: Grace unto you and peace be multiplied. All this is evidently introductory. * *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance,* I mean to ſay, that is *incorruptible, and undefiled,*

* The meaning is not, I conceive, very difficult. They were the elect or choſen people of God under the goſpel, as the Jews had been under the law, to enjoy peculiar means of holineſs and ſalvation, as the Apoſtle has explained his own meaning in chap. ii. 9, 10; which 2 Ep. chap. i. 10, further confirms; neither is there any ſhadow of reaſon for ſuppoſing, that St. Peter's ideas upon this ſubject were more perſonal and particular, whatever may be thought of St. Paul's, who before his converſion had been a Phariſee, that is, a predeſtinarian, and ſome of whoſe expreſſions, in Rom. ix. more eſpecially, ſeem to intend ſomething further: and to which place in particular I know not whether this Apoſtle, in his ſecond Epiſtle, chap. iii. 16, may not have a reference.—And this they were through the ſanctification or purification of the Spirit; which alſo I am diſpoſed to explain, not ſo much perſonally, as of that general deſignation of the firſt Gentile Chriſtians by the miraculous gifts and powers, upon their faith alone, without circumciſion and any other legal and ceremonial purification, which the following paſſages ſeem to me abundantly to juſtify; Acts x. 44—47; chap. xv. 7, 8, 9; Rom. xv. 16.—And how the whole of this was, in order to their being the holy and covenanted people of God ever after, may be ſeen by thoſe who ſhall again conſider, in the former view, Tit. ii. 11—14, and in the latter, Exod. xxiv. 3—9; to which St. Peter no doubt refers, and which will not ſuffer us to give to the *blood of ſprinkling* any other meaning.

and

and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation, ſuch a ſalvation as has now been mentioned, *ready,* that is, now in readineſs and preparation, *to be revealed in the laſt time, wherein ye greatly rejoice,* have reaſon, and I hope do ſo, *though now for a ſeaſon,* for a ſhort ſeaſon, during which the ſalvation, though ready, is delayed, *ye are in heavineſs,* &c. *That the trial of your faith, which is more precious,* or of more importance, *than* that *of gold, which periſheth, though it be tried in the fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt: Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory;* full of the expectation and reliſh of ſuch near and approaching glory: (So alſo St. Paul, in Coloſſ. iii. 4. "When Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, "then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory;" and again in 2 Tim. ii. 10, "that ſalvation which is "in Chriſt Jeſus, with eternal glory.") *Receiving in the end of your faith the ſalvation of your ſouls. Of which ſalvation,* &c.—

Here ſeveral particulars of no mean importance are ſuggeſted; which need not however now, perhaps, to be much enlarged upon; ſave only what is ſaid of the believer's or Chriſtian's hope, as originating in the mercy of God, as founded upon the reſurrection of Chriſt, and as having for its object an incorruptible, undefiled, and never fading life or inheritance in heaven; which, in the view in which

it

it is here brought forward, amidſt divers other ſummaries of the Chriſtian doctrine, cannot be too much thought upon.—Neither is what follows, in theſe two other verſes of this chapter, the 20th and 21ſt, in another view, much leſs obſervable: *Who verily*, ſays St. Peter, he has been before ſpeaking of Chriſt, as the Lamb of God; *was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you; who by him do believe in God, that raiſed him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.*

This paſſage I know not how to omit, becauſe it ſo happily explains, whatever may be thought of it in any other view, the nature and place of that faith in Chriſt, which, in connection with repentance, is ſo expreſsly required under the goſpel; and which, when it is rightly underſtood and explained, we are here taught to be faith in God the Father Almighty in the laſt inſtance, that is, in his ſuppoſed promiſes and mercies, however Jeſus Chriſt is repreſented as being, and really may be, the firſt and more immediate object of it. Still, however, we by him do believe in God, in him ultimately and moſt properly, however Jeſus Chriſt, whom he is ſuppoſed to have raiſed from the dead, and in this way to have glorified, may be the more immediate means and way of our doing ſo. From which view of the ſubject I am diſpoſed to obſerve in the firſt place, to all ſuch as may diſbelieve the goſpel, or may be tempted ſo to do, the importance of their well conſidering this alledged fact, the reſurrection of Chriſt,

and

and whether they can, under all the circumſtances of the caſe, deliberately, and with the full and entire ſatisfaction of the mind deny it, before they ſhall proceed ſo far; (ſince, till this can be done, Chriſtian religion muſt be true to them, and all difficulties, however great, fall before the predominancy of ſuch a fact, if not contradicted:)—and, ſecondly, the comfort which ſeems to ſpring up, and be provided in this way, and in almoſt any conceivable event of things at laſt, for ſincere and virtuous believers; their faith, according to this view of it, and which is an Apoſtle's view of it, being undoubtedly right at laſt, and ſo far as God the Father Almighty, and his ſuppoſed promiſes and mercies, are the objects of it, even though it ſhould be found hereafter, as I truſt it will not, to have been, in the firſt inſtance, and ſo far as Jeſus is concerned, miſtaken. A conſideration, I am free to confeſs, which has been very comfortable and confirming to my own mind, when ſometimes doubtful thoughts have come acroſs it, as has ſometimes been the caſe; and which I therefore mention the more willingly, if perchance any others ſhall chooſe to partake with me in this kind of conſolation. *

1 John

* "Whoever is of a ſtudious and inquiſitive diſpoſition," ſays Dr. Jortin, in his Remarks, "and not of a ſanguine com-"plexion, has poſſibly known what it is to doubt:"—And in the life of that zealous preacher and writer of the laſt age, Mr. Richard Baxter, prefixed to his practical works, we are told, "that few were ever more ſtrongly *tempted* to infidelity." Names do not change the natures of things; and the probability is, that what have appeared to Lord Herbert, and divers

1 John i. 5th, &c. *This then is the meſſage we have heard of him*, meaning Jeſus Chriſt, *and declare unto you:* it may be ſummed up in this briefly; *that God is light*, a Being of ſpotleſs purity, *and in him is no darkneſs*, or turpitude *at all. If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him*, are in a ſtate of reconciliation or friendſhip with him, *and walk in darkneſs*, or wickedneſs, *we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light*, endeavour in our places, and according to our abilities, to be holy as God is holy, *we have fellowſhip one with another*, that is, God and we have, and the pretenſion, bold as it may ſeem, has nothing in it which may not, upon the principles of the goſpel, be admitted; *and*, in ſuch a caſe alſo, *the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin*; from the guilt and ſtain of the ſins which we had formerly committed, and ere God and we

divers others, rational doubts, were, in Mr. Baxter's view, Satanical ſuggeſtions.—Let us now hear another religious and wiſe perſon; eminently wiſe, in my opinion, though only the following paſſage had been written by him; "I am now waiting for the *great teacher*, convinced that the order of nature is perfect; that infinite wiſdom and goodneſs govern all things; and that Chriſtianity comes from God. But at the ſame time, puzzled by many doubts, anxious for more light, and reſting with full and conſtant aſſurance only on this one truth; that the practice of virtue is the duty and dignity of man, and, in all events, his wiſeſt and ſafeſt courſe." (Dr. Price).—And it has been before obſerved by another eminent perſon, that "that alone is to be called a man's opinion, which is of any other the moſt habitual to him, and occurs upon moſt occaſions."—Were it not better to doubt with theſe men, than not to have done ſo with many perſons?

had

had this fellowſhip together; as the meaning moſt probably is, and as what ſo ſoon follows, in chap. ii. 1ſt. ſeems to confirm. From hence, I think, it follows, that according to St. John alſo, as well as St. Paul before quoted, the deſign of the goſpel is rather practical than notional; and that the whole of his account here is in perfect conformity to ſuch other plain and ſummary views and repreſentations upon the ſubject as have been before us; unleſs what is ſaid of cleanſing by the blood of Chriſt may be thought to ſuggeſt ſomething more particular. This therefore I would now conſider, having no more of theſe ſummaries to add; and the rather, as one or two other phraſes, not very diſſimilar to this, as that *Jeſus Chriſt died for our ſins*, in 1 Cor. xv. 3. and this other, in Heb. i. 3. *Who when he had by himſelf, purged our ſins*, may be thought to have been, at the proper time and place, but ſlightly touched, or deſignedly paſſed over.

The queſtion, as litigated by divines of different denominations, ſeems to be, whether theſe phraſes, to which more might be added, do only ſignify, the certainty of our pardon with God through or by Jeſus Chriſt, who died for us, that is, in our cauſe and on our behalf, and in and by whoſe death, taken in connection with his Reſurrection, the covenant or promiſe of pardon, brought by Chriſt, was aſſured to us; as the Socinians do only allow: or whether, over and above this, which is ſo eaſy to be underſtood and explained, there was in the death of Chriſt any ſuch real transfer or imputation of guilt, and laying on of our ſins upon him, as to juſtify the

notion

notion and aſſertion of his having made a full and adequate ſatisfaction to the Divine law and juſtice for them? and, of conſequence, having ſuffered, and been puniſhed, in our room and ſtead; and not died, as he might be ſtill ſaid to have done, for our good only? Which queſtion alſo, the reader, who is converſant with ſubjects of this ſort, will probably acknowledge to be dependant on this other, *viz.* How, and in what way, the ſacrifices for ſin, under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, from whence this ſort of phraſeology is undoubtedly taken, were ſuppoſed to have been availing in that view? Upon this ſubject I crave leave to tranſcribe the paſſages following.

" *But now,*" ſays Biſhop Butler, quoting the words of St. Paul, as is commonly ſuppoſed, " *once* " *in the end of the world, Chriſt appeared to put* " *away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.* And this " ſacrifice was in the higheſt degree, and with the " moſt extenſive influence, of that efficacy for ob- " taining pardon, which the Heathens may be " ſuppoſed to have thought their ſacrifices to have " been, and which the Jewiſh ſacrifices really were, " in ſome degree, and with regard to ſome perſons.

" How, and in what particular way, it had this " efficacy, there are not wanting perſons who have " endeavoured to explain: but I do not find that " the ſcripture has explained it. We ſeem to be " very much in the dark, concerning the manner in " which the ancients underſtood atonement to be " made, i. e. pardon to be obtained by ſacrifices. " And if the ſcripture has, as ſurely it has, left this

" matter

" matter of the ſatisfaction of Chriſt myſterious, " left ſomewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures " about it muſt be, if not evidently abſurd, yet at " leaſt uncertain. Nor has any one reaſon to com- " plain of want of further information, unleſs he " can ſhew his claim to it." Analogy, part ii. ch. v.

Thus dubiouſly, and with the moſt extreme indeciſion, ſpeaks this eminently wiſe and moſt religious perſon. Others however, and thoſe not leſs eminent in each of theſe reſpects, and as far removed from every ſuſpicion of heretical pravity and levity, have endeavoured to be more determinate. I ſhall mention two only. " Before this," ſays, Dr. Jeffery (he is ſpeaking of the mediation of Chriſt)---" there " was a great number of rites which God had eſta- " bliſhed for fences of the true religion, ſo many " rituals, for the better ſecurity of morals; and " among other things, ſacrifices were of more ge- " neral uſe, and of much high eſtimation. Theſe " ſacrifices, eſpecially propitiatory, were reputed the " principal means of reconciling offenders unto God: " and though they were, in truth, and at firſt, only " ceremonies of repentance; [meaning, no doubt, ceremonies which ſhould be accompanied with repentance, and without which they would be of no avail, as Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper are now with us] " they became at length, through the " errors of men, to be an appeaſing of God. [Let this be true, and how far below the proper point and æra are the ideas of a modern writer in this inſtance, who, in tracing up the corrupt notion of atonement, as he ſuppoſes it, to its origin, goes no

farther back than to the fifth century*] "The re-
"pentance of the ſinner, made ſolemn by the ſacri-
"fice of propitiation, was accepted of God, inſtead
"of puniſhment; and certainly, repentance is
"better than puniſhment; and puniſhment is not
"ſo much honour to God as repentance. But when
"ſacrifices were made uſe of without repentance,
"and inſtead of repentance; this was an abuſe of
"the ceremony, a diſhonour to God, and a deluſion
"in the ſinner. But, let propitiatory ſacrifices be
"never ſo much as they ſhould be; let the errors
"concerning them be perfectly rectified; yet
"was the doctrine concerning Chriſt, and the
"ſacrifice of his death, a much more ſolemn and
"awful obligation to repentance, and aſſurance of
"pardon, [to all the penitent] than all the ſacrifices
"in the world could be." Tracts, vol. ii. p. 330, 331.——"It is a wonder," ſays Dr. Whichcote, "any ſhould think that *might* be done by ſacrifice, "which could not be done by mental diſpoſition. "Nothing in ſacrifice could be acceptable to "God, but the *meaning* of the ſacrificer." Aphoriſms, Cent. xii. No. 1116.

So theſe two confeſſedly pious, judicious, and learned perſons. By whom I am willing to be determined, for the preſent, as I ſeem to have thus far clear ideas upon the ſubject, and have not obſerved in any of the other explications of it, and which propoſe to carry the matter further, aught that is

* Dr. Prieſtley, in his *Corruptions*, &c. vol. i.

more

more uſeful, and at the ſame time intelligible. But I am forgeting perhaps the general argument in this endeavour to clear up a part only, and ſuch a part as may perhaps come again before me.

The deſign has been, to take ſuch a ſurvey of the nature of the Chriſtian doctrine, as might aſſiſt in judging, whether, the myſterioufneſs of it conſidered, it could poſſibly have been delivered to the world with good effect without an inſpiration ſo full, and abſolute, and at all times the ſame, as has been generally pleaded for? And to this queſtion the anſwer, I think, muſt be, that it really was not, in its firſt and pureſt ſtate, of ſo myſterious and complex a nature. For the firſt and main principles of it, we have ſeen to have been but few number, in of an obvious and practical, rather than of an abſtruſe and ſpeculative kind; and theſe to have been grounded, and made to reſt principally, for their evidence and authenticity, not upon any thing ſo inviſible and remote as inſpiration, or inward light, &c. but upon a fact ſufficiently obvious, and capable of being judged of by the known and eſtabliſhed rules of evidence; the Reſurrection, or otherwiſe, of Jeſus Chriſt. By which, however, I do not mean to deny, that there may have been ſuch inward illumination, inſpiration, or ſuggeſtion of a ſupernatural kind, as ſome plead for, upon ſome neceſſary occaſions; but only ſuch an equal, uniform, and at all times the ſame inſpiration, as does not ſeem to have been always neceſſary, nor in fact the truth of the caſe, if we will read with a reaſonable degree of freedom of thought the Old and

New Teſtament, and obſerve how differently we ſometimes feel and are affected in the reading.

But how, it may be ſaid, ſhall we know, according to this notion upon the ſubject, what is, or is not the word of God? How draw the line ſo as to diſcriminate between what is divine, or may be but human only, in the Scriptures?

To this I reply, that as we cannot always, and with the preciſion which ſeems to be intended in the queſtion, do this, ſo neither does it ſeem (—the great principles of repentance, faith, a future judgment, and the life everlaſting, reſting for their evidence, as we have ſeen, upon another ſort of foundation, *viz.* the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and being attached to this almoſt only; for which ſee again, Luke xxiv. 47, 48. Acts x. 40—43. chap. xvii. 30, 31. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.—) to be very neceſſary. Let me illuſtrate this, if perchance I can, by a few inſtances.

I open the Bible, for inſtance, and there read in the very firſt chapter and verſe of it, that "In the "beginning God created the heaven and the earth," ſaying, "Let there be light, and there was light,"—and ſo onward. And this, I am taught to believe, was written by inſpiration. But now let us ſuppoſe it may not have been ſo; or that I, however, through ſome infirmity of the mind or other, may not have ſeen, as ſome others do, and as I, but for this, might have done, the evidence of it. I aſk where, and how far, in this very ſuppoſeable caſe (this being previouſly acknowledged, that it is always better to be right than wrong) is there any great harm or evil conſequence? For does this propoſition,

poſition, that " God in the beginning made the " heaven and the earth" ceaſe, upon this account alone, to be ſtill a moſt noble notion, and the only tolerably conſiſtent and rational account of the beginning of things? and the whole of what follows, in this and the two next chapters, of the firſt ſtate of man, and beginning of ſin and death, &c. to have been at leaſt very happily conceived, and to be one of the moſt pleaſing and uſeful upon theſe ſubjects of all the ancient parables or apologues? And ſo alſo I would ſay, of theſe other ſuppoſed words of the Divine Being, upon occaſion of the firſt murder, in Gen. iv. 10. " The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground;" and again theſe in chap. xviii. 21. upon an occaſion which may be there ſeen, " I will go down now and ſee whether " they have done altogether according to the cry " of it, which is come unto me;" and once more, of theſe in the ſtory of Joſeph, in Gen. xxxix. 9; or rather of the whole of that fine narrative in which they occur, as pertaining to an incident in it only; " How then can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?"—And ſo alſo, to paſs over, for the preſent, the other hiſtorical books of the Old Teſtament, in which to receive all or reject all without diſcrimination were perhaps equally raſh and uncritical, we may be allowed perhaps to ſay, of by far the largeſt parts of Job, and of the book of Pſalms, and of almoſt innumerable paſſages in Iſaiah, Jeremiah, and the other Prophets: which, whether originating in the moſt abſolute inſpiration or not, are ſometimes ſo happily conceived and ex-

preſſed, and have running through them ſuch a rich vein of the moſt pure and elevated thought, as to render them in the higheſt degree favourable to the intereſts of piety and virtue, and of more real authority and weight, in this view, than aught elſe probably that was ever written, or is now for certain any where elſe to be met with.——And yet who can deny that in this ſame book of holy and divine ſcripture, as I am willing to call it in general, there are other paſſages to be met with, which are not of the ſame intrinſic worth, and therefore not in this view of the ſame equal weight and authority, however the ſame character of inſpired or ſacred may be externally applied to them; but which no language or deſcription of this ſort, however zealouſly and frequently applied, can perhaps elevate into greatneſs, or cauſe in this way to loſe their intrinſic and moſt proper character and nature? the obſervation being as applicable here perhaps as to any caſe whatſoever,

" Pigmies are pigmies ſtill, though perch'd on Alps,
" And pyramids are pyramids in vales."

I may conclude then, I ſuppoſe, that the books now making up the volume, or canon, as it is ſometimes called, of the Old and New Teſtament, and which is confeſſedly the beſt and moſt curious ſingle book in the world, are not however all of them, nor any one of them perhaps, in all its parts, of the ſame equal and unvaried excellence, and of the ſame uniform and high authority, however this notion of them may in general have prevailed; but may be reaſonably read with ſomething more of diſcrimination

tion and taſte, than the teachers and paſtors of moſt churches have in general allowed; and would perhaps be more profitably read, and with greater cordiality and acceptance, if read under the influence of a leſs ſuperſtitious ſpirit, and with more attention paid to what we feel them to be in the reading, than to any ſuch external characters and denominations of them, as may indeed ſilence, but do not always ſatisfy the reader.

And to this notion I acknowledge myſelf to be the more inclined, by the conſideration of the manner in which the holy book, uſually called the Canon, is ſuppoſed by divines to have been firſt put or brought together. Which was not, it ſeems, all at once, nor under the ſanction or ſeal of any perſon or perſons profeſſing to have authority from above for this purpoſe; but only gradually, as it ſhould ſeem, and occaſionally, and by the force very much of each part; (through intrinſic worth and excellence of character, in connection with ſome other and more adventitious circumſtances;) making its way;—until at length the whole, as we now have it, was in general received, though not in every place at the ſame time, nor with the ſame high deference paid to every part equally: which is ſuch an account of the matter, conformable, I think, to the repreſentations more uſually made upon the ſubject, as ſeems to me to be very favourable to ſuch a diſcurſive, free, and unſuperſtitious uſe of it, as is above pleaded for, and yet, I truſt, not impious: leaving abundant room to the Chriſtian preacher and philoſopher to make the utmoſt poſſible uſe of what

he ſees and feels to be excellent, with liberty of leſs attending to what he cannot ſee and feel to be ſo; and ſuppoſing both of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian revelations ſomething to have been true and ſupernatural in the firſt inſtance, however ſomething more infirm, and merely human, may have ſince intermingled*.

* Whether the following paſſage will be admitted as a pertinent illuſtration of what is advanced above, I know not; I certainly think it not quite foreign to the purpoſe. "I inſtanced "to them [an enthuſiaſtic ſect then in Scotland] "that there "had been Millenarians before them, who had died as other "men, and ſaw not in their life-time the ſecond coming of "Chriſt.—I forewarned them of the diſgrace, poverty, and all "their concomitant miſeries, ſuch principles, if perſevered in, "would certainly bring upon them. But they were not "affected by any thing I could ſay, telling me, they had "God's word for their principles and conduct; and that the "Bible, wherein they had his words, was the beſt book in the "world. I anſwered, God never taught ſuch principles, nor "commanded ſuch conduct, and that the Bible, which they "applauded ſo much, had led them to folly, and that they "would do better to pay more attention to their own judg-"ment and common ſenſe, than to follow the unintelligible "writings of other men, and manifeſt abſurdities," &c.—See Gent. Mag. for May, 1791. I am miſtaken if we do not ſee in this paſſage the principle of common ſenſe, of a plain, practical, and uſeful good common ſenſe, conflicting with ſuch improper and overwhelming notions of the abſolute and unconditional authority merely of the Scriptures, as perhaps ſuperſtition, rather than a ſober and enlightened underſtanding, has not unfrequently clothed them with: and, I hope, nothing worſe; being willing to believe that the author of the Narrative was not without very high degrees of reverential reſpect for them, on account of internal excellence, &c. though it is not, in this extract, expreſsly mentioned.

CHAP. IX.

CHAPTER IX.

Some further Obſervations on the Epiſtles of St. Paul.—His Doctrine of Juſtification more eſpecially.

IN the preceding chapters I appear to myſelf to have had juſtifiable reaſons for making a diſtinction between St. Paul and the other writers of the New Teſtament, in reſpect of his learned education, both Grecian and Rabbinical, and the influence which this may poſſibly have had upon his Chriſtianity. I do not however mean, after ſuch a general mention, to purſue the ſubject any farther, unleſs the following remarks upon his doctrine of juſtification by faith, ſo largely treated by him in his epiſtle to the Romans in particular, and to the conſideration of which I have before pledged myſelf, (in the remark above upon Rom. i. 17.) may be conſidered as ſomething of this ſort.—— It will be found, I apprehend, to be the ſame ſubſtantially with our Saviour's doctrine of *repentance and remiſſion of ſins*, only reaſoned upon and ſtated in a more elaborate and ſyſtematic manner. I ſhall begin with a paſſage in the tenth chapter, which is not upon the whole very difficult, and then proceed to others, if there be occaſion.

Rom. xth, verſe the 5th, and following. *For Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law*, the way of being righteous by the law, when

he ſaith, *that the man which doth thoſe things ſhall live by them*, or for that reaſon. *But the righteouſneſs which is of faith*, the way of being righteous by means of it, (which is the ſubject he had before adverted to in verſes the 3d and 4th, and which he is now about to explain more particularly,) *ſpeaketh on this wiſe*, (in the words of the ſame Moſes alſo, if we may be allowed to detort them a little from their firſt direction, and may ſuppoſe them to have had ſome reference, though of the remote and allegorical kind only *, to the preſent ſubject.) *Say not in thine heart, who ſhall aſcend into heaven? that is, to bring Chriſt*, the juſtifier, *down from above*, as it were. *Or who ſhall deſcend into the deep? that is, to bring up* the ſame *Chriſt*, or juſtifier of ſinners, *again from the dead?*—in other words, does not ſend the inquiring and anxious ſinner upon ſuch errands, and employ him in ſuch ſort of reſearches; ---*But what ſaith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart*, is, in other words, eaſy to be underſtood and explained, *that is, the word* or doctrine *of faith which we preach.* And which is in brief this, *That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus;* confeſs him to be

* That St. Paul had ſome ſuch idea, I cannot ſay that I have any doubt; becauſe it is ſo agreeable to his manner in many other places; and that it was the conſequence very much of his education in thoſe ancient Jewiſh ſchools where ſomething of this ſort, commonly called Cabbaliſm, was probably taught by rule; though not then, it is preſumed, with the extravagance and abſurdity which has ſince been charged upon ſome Jewiſh Cabbaliſts.

Lord,

Lord, as the ſenſe ſeems to be, and as the 13th verſe tends to confirm; *and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead*, that is, ſhall inwardly or really believe this, and not confeſs it with the mouth only, *thou ſhalt be ſaved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs*, or ſo as to be reckoned righteous, (of which hereafter) *and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation*, or ſo as to have the hope of it, and the title.

Such was the word or doctrine of faith, that is, of juſtification and ſalvation by faith, which St. Paul preached. Let us therefore view it a little more particularly. It was, it ſeems, in ſubſtance, and generally, this, that ſinners, by believing, might be juſtified and ſaved. But then this faith muſt be a ſincere faith, or which had its ſeat in the heart, and did from thence proceed into confeſſion with the mouth, that is, into profeſſion and practice, or elſe it was not of the right nature: neither are the objects of it, which are here mentioned, leſs obſervable, *viz.* that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, that is, the Chriſtian's Lord; and, which is the ſame in effect with this, and proves or infers it, that God had raiſed him from the dead. From whence, I think, it follows, that none other lordſhip of Chriſt than what follows from ſuch a Reſurrection, is proved by it, and grounded upon it, ſhould be here ſought for; and of conſequence, that every thing here is ſo far in the fulleſt conſiſtency with thoſe other emphatical and brief views and ſummaries of the

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nature and deſign of Chriſtianity which have been before us.

The next paſſage I ſhall mention is chap. iii. the 21ſt verſe and following. It will be tolerably well explained, I hope, by ſuch aſſiſtance as what has gone before may perhaps afford.

Chap. iii. 21ſt, &c. *But now the righteouſneſs of God,* which is of God's providing for us and acceptance, (as the meaning may be ſhewn to be hereafter) *without the law,* which has been ſhewn in the preceding verſes to be no longer capable of giving us any aſſiſtance in this way, *is manifeſt, being witneſſed by the law and the prophets;* (as was implied in another paſſage, Acts x. 43. conſidered formerly) *Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all, and upon all* that believe, for there is no difference* of Jew or Gentile in this inſtance. *For all have ſinned,* the Jews and Gentiles both, (as has been before proved in the argument from ver. 9th to the 20th) *and come ſhort of the glory of God,* of that glory with and from him which they might otherwiſe have hoped for; ſee chap. v. 1ſt. in illuſtration. *Being juſtified,* that is, now, and under the preſent circumſtances, juſtified, if juſtified at all, or more literally, made righteous, (we have had the righteouſneſs of God before, and it would ſeem to be of importance in the conſideration of ſuch an intereſting

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paſſage to retain the ſame uniform turn of expreſſion throughout, as in the original) *freely by his grace, through the redemption*, or by means of the redemption, *that is in Jeſus Chriſt: whom* (to explain this matter of the redemption a little more particularly) *God hath ſet forth as a propitiatory*, or mercy-ſeat; referring, as is ſuppoſed, to that lid or upper part of the ark, in the holy place, amongſt the Jews, upon which God was ſuppoſed to be ſeated, and from thence to ſignify and diſplay his mercy upon the people;---*through faith in his blood*, or in caſe that we believe in it, or upon it;---*to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion*, or becauſe of the remiſſion, *of the ſins that are paſt*, that are gone before, and have been paſſed by through ſo many ages, without what might ſeem to be a proper notice of them in ſome way or other, *through the forbearance*, the almoſt blameable and moſt unaccountable forbearance, as ſome perhaps may have been tempted to think it, *of God*. And therefore I repeat it again, that ye may the more particularly remark, as I hope ye will, ſo obſervable a circumſtance;---*to declare* then, *I ſay, in the time that now is*, and under the goſpel, whatever paſſing by or over of ſins there may have been in the ages of the world which are paſt, without any proper notice, as may ſeem, being taken of them; *his righteouſneſs, that he may be righteous*, may be now ſeen and acknowleged to be ſo, *and* at the ſame time *make righteous*, or notwithſtanding his making righteous, *the believer in Jeſus*.

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in this paſſage to have been, and of conſequence his ideas in it to be much more favourable to the uſually received notions of atonement and ſatisfaction for ſins by the death of Chriſt, than myſelf perhaps at ſome times, and the Socinians at all times, have been willing to allow. The oppoſition moſt plainly intended in it between the times which have gone before, and in which ſins are repreſented as having been rather paſſed over than attended to, as under the government of a holy God might perhaps have rather been expected; and the time which now is, in which the ſame holy and righteous and juſt God is ſuppoſed upon this ſubject to have now more explicitly declared himſelf, ſeems to be full in proof of this; and ſo alſo ſeems to be the alluſion made in it to the mercy-ſeat amongſt the Jews, and the application of this idea to Chriſt; which was always, I think, ſuppoſed to have been previouſly atoned with blood, and was never conſidered as ſuch, nor as ſuch approached, but under ſuch circumſtances; ſee Leviticus xvi. 2, &c; whence the whole train of thought in this paſſage ſeems to have been taken.——By all which, however, I do not mean to ſuggeſt, that ſuch a notion of atonement or ſatisfaction is hereby indubitably eſtabliſhed; but only to repreſent what the ideas of St. Paul in this paſſage ſeem in fact to have been: after which it will ſtill remain to be conſidered, how far ſuch a repreſentation as is here made is to be reſolved in any degree into the then popular, perhaps, and even miſtaken ideas, poſſibly, of the Jews of that time, upon the ſubject of piacular ſacrifices,

ſacrifices, as Dr. Jeffery has above ſuggeſted;---or, into the peculiar fervency and warmth of St. Paul's genius and temperament, which ſeem ſometimes to expatiate with pleaſure in remote and ſpecious analogies;---or is to be rather conceived of as having been written under the influence of the moſt plenary inſpiration, and is of courſe to be religiouſly received and abided by. Submitting then this to the conſideration of the reader; for I would be underſtood in theſe papers only to report as I find, and to propoſe only to conſideration, rather than to dogmatize; I now paſs on to ſuch an explication of the phraſes, righteouſneſs of God, and making righteous, &c. as ſome few paſſages in the next chapter will render, unleſs I am miſtaken, very eaſy.

Rom iv. 1ſt verſe and following. *What ſhall we ſay then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the fleſh* at leaſt, *hath found?* We are all fond of his relationſhip to us as ſuch, and of drawing his character and caſe into example upon almoſt every other occaſion; may I then be permitted to avail myſelf of them in this inſtance? *For*, to to make the experiment in his caſe, and ſee how far it will be aſſiſting in this argument, *if Abraham was made righteous by his works*, by the completeneſs of them, and when conſidered as works of law only; *he hath*, according to the common apprehenſion at leaſt, and which I am willing for the preſent to acquieſce in, (ſee chap. iii. 27. in illuſtration) *whereof to glory: But not*; this, it ſeems, he had not; *before God. For what ſaith*

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the Scripture? to which the appeal can alone be made, and the queſtion be determined by, in this caſe? The account there is this, *Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteouſneſs;* was put down to his account in the book of God as ſuch, and was, to all intents and purpoſes, as much ſo to him, as if he had been literally, and in the moſt ſtrict ſenſe, a righteous perſon.—As all that follows to verſe 23d, is only, in St. Paul's way, ſome farther proof or illuſtration of this, I may be allowed, perhaps, to paſs it over, and to tranſcribe his application of it only, which there begins;—*Now that it was imputed to him*, meaning that his faith was ſo, *was not written for his ſake alone*; (the thought ſeems to be much the ſame with that in chap. xv. 5.) *But for us alſo, to whom it*, meaning the ſame principle, faith, *ſhall be imputed*; or rather, to whom there will be the ſame imputation, *if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus.*

Here the things following ſeem to be obſervable;

Firſt, that in the ideas of St. Paul, faith, meaning faith in Chriſt, or in God, who raiſed him from the dead, which is here ſuppoſed to be the ſame thing, as it alſo is in divers other places, (ſee above upon 1 Pet. i. 21. Rom. x. 9; of this preſent chapter, ver. 5th; add alſo John v. 24.) is ſuppoſed to be under the goſpel the only juſtifying righteouſneſs:

That it is therefore, ſecondly, ſpoken of as an imputed righteouſneſs, or a righteouſneſs ſo taken,

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or ſet down to our account, and reckoned to us in the room and ſtead of a literal and ſtrict righteouſneſs, with the utmoſt propriety; in order to denote this conſtructive nature of it, and to diſtinguiſh it from that which is ſo literally, and in the primary ſenſe.

From whence it ſeems to follow, thirdly, that they do greatly err upon this ſubject, and from the preciſion and exactneſs of St. Paul's ideas reſpecting it, who ſpeak of the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and who aſſert, that it is his righteouſneſs that is imputed to us for juſtification; whereas, according to St. Paul, it is not that, but our faith in him, which is ſo recknoned or imputed. Neither again does it ſeem very proper to ſay, that in this matter of juſtification the ſinner's faith has the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for its more immediate object; ſome of the paſſages quoted above, though not excluding this, as Rom. iii. 25. yet ſpeaking with full as much emphaſis and propriety of ſome other objects of it, as Rom. x. 9. 1 Pet. i. 21, &c.

From theſe ſame premiſes it may be clearly ſeen, fourthly, why this imputed or conſtructive righteouſneſs only, is ſo often called by St. Paul, as it is in chap. x. 3. and in chap. iii. 21, &c. God's righteouſneſs, and the righteouſneſs of God; *viz.* becauſe of his merciful providing and gracious acceptance of it in this view; this very faith itſelf, as well as the ſalvation promiſed to it, being no proviſion or dictate of mere nature, or of law, but a divine vouchſafement or

gift only, as St. Paul alſo teaches, in Rom. iii. 24. Eph. ii. 8, &c. Add alſo, Acts xi. 18.

And from the whole, who diſcerns not, in the laſt place, how ſuch a faith in Chriſt on the ſinner's part, and ſuch gracious acceptance and imputation of it on the part of God, does finally and ſubſtantially reſolve itſelf into the ſame with that repentance and remiſſion of ſins which was to be preached in all nations in the name of Jeſus; and thus reconcile together not only Jeſus and St. Paul, but St. Paul and St. James alſo; if we will only underſtand by thoſe works which St. Paul ſo expreſsly excludes, works of law, as we certainly ought; and by thoſe which St. James requires and ſpeaks ſo highly of, works of faith, that is, done in it, and proceeding from it; to which it is certain that St. Paul neither had, nor could have, any objection. To ſome it has ſeemed probable that the righteouſneſs of God by faith, in Phil. iii. 9. is to be underſtood of works of this nature.

Of any other doctrine of St. Paul my preſent deſign allows me not to ſpeak, unleſs generally. He is without doubt the moſt metaphyſical and doctrinal of all the writers of the New Teſtament; but I know not whether, for that reaſon or any other, the moſt uſeful. Perhaps in this view St. Luke, conſidered as the author of the goſpel bearing his name, and of the book of the Acts alſo, may conteſt the palm of pre-eminence with him, and even bear it away, in the eſtimation of ſome perſons. They may be truely ſaid, I think, to be the two principal contributors to the canon of the New

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Teſtament; and though not contradictory and incompatible, yet, in ſome reſpects, very different kinds of writers. St. Luke principally records facts; amongſt which, the next in importance, after the Reſurrection of Chriſt, may be ſaid to be the effuſion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecoſt, the converſion of St. Paul, and the receiving into the church of the whole body of the Gentiles in the perſon of Cornelius: St. Paul is a diſcourſer upon doctrines chiefly. In St. Luke we obſerve much perſpicuity and ſimplicity, both of narration and of thought; in St. Paul much involution both of thought and ſtyle, (the latter probably owing to the former) and ſomething very difficult to be underſtood: it may be even doubted, (if there may be no impiety in ſaying ſo) whether he had always clear ideas himſelf, and was fully maſter of what he meant and ſeemed willing to expreſs. To the reader of St. Luke alone, Chriſtianity would probably ſeem an intereſting, but not perhaps a very complicated ſyſtem; ſomething like that poſſibly which has been, more eſpecially of late, denominated Socinian or Unitarian; the baſis of which may be ſaid to be this, "Jeſus of Nazareth, a man "approved of God," &c: But in all probability not ſo, to the very ſame perſon or perſons, who ſhould go on to read with the accuſtomed ſimplicity, and reverence, the epiſtles of St. Paul, in which it may be obſerved, that not only theſe, but Calviniſts, Arminians, Methodiſts, and Myſtics of almoſt every ſort, ſeldom fail to find, or, however, to think they find, ſomething not unfavourable to their reſpective

ſyſtems. Next to theſe, as a contributor, if indeed there be any juſt cauſe for ſaying next, ſhould be reckoned, no doubt, (the greatneſs of his intimacy with Chriſt, and authority of his apoſtolic character conſidered,) St. John, the indiſputable author of the goſpel and epiſtles bearing his name; and concerning whom I have ſometimes aſked myſelf, whether a perſon who ſhould take his ideas of the nature and deſign of the Chriſtion religion from him chiefly, would not more probably incline to the ſentiments of Dr. Clarke, than to any other, either ancient or modern writer. Of the epiſtles of St. Peter it gives me pleaſure to ſay, that they ſeem to be written upon the moſt Catholic and general principles of Chriſtianity; are in perfect concord with the reſt of the New Teſtament; and, at the ſame time that they are inſtructive and edifying, have very little miniſtered to the augmentation of modern controverſy.

The moſt uſeful concluſion to be drawn from the whole of theſe ſeveral remarks ſeems to me to be this, that by far the larger part of thoſe controverſies by which Chriſtian churches have ſuffered themſelves to be divided, are of an interminable nature; the appeal, in many of them, being made to writers whoſe commiſſion was limited, and did not perhaps extend ſo far; and who being in the poſſeſſion, by divine vouchſafement and revelation, of ſome few general and intereſting ideas, concerning the life, character, and Reſurrection of Chriſt, the neceſſity of repentance, certainty of pardon, and of a future ſtate and judgement, were left, unleſs in

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ſome very peculiar and extraordinary caſes, as in thoſe of Acts xth and xvth, for inſtance, to ſpeak of them, and repreſent them, very much in their own way, and agreeable to their reſpective educations, reliſhes, and natural temperament and turns of mind; which ſeem in fact to have been very different.

And why then, if this may have been the caſe, purſue with ſo much zeal and earneſtneſs ſome of the more minute and nicer queſtions in theology, and ſeek the anſwer to them where, in all probability, it is not to be found, and from writers who might not perhaps, to caſes of ſuch a ſort, be quite competent?

CHAPTER X.

*On the Prophecies of Daniel.**

IN the preceding papers I have had more than one occaſion of referring to the prophecies of Daniel, and to thoſe extraordinary diſcoveries, more eſpecially, which Mr. Mede, according to ſome, has made in them. Upon theſe ſubjects I feel a diſpoſition to be now more explicit and particular. It was promiſed formerly,† and would ſuit very well with the general deſign, though that obligation was not upon me.

According to Sir Iſaac Newton, "The book of "Daniel is a collection of papers written at ſeveral "times. The ſix laſt chapters contain prophecies "written at ſeveral times by Daniel himſelf: the ſix "firſt are a collection of hiſtorical papers written by "others."‡ This perhaps may be true, with ſome little exception, as ſome may think, for what of the prophetic kind occurs in the interpretation of Ne-

* Much of what follows upon the prophetic part of this book only, was publiſhed in an *Eſſay towards an Interpretation*, &c. printed for Johnſon, in 1776: ſince which time more may have appeared upon the ſame ſubject than the writer knows of.—— With Mr. Wintle's *Daniel, an improved verſion, with Notes*; and *Eſſays on Select parts of the Old Teſtament*, publiſhed by Johnſon in 1793, he is not wholly unacquainted.

† See before, in Chap. II.

‡ Obſervations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalyps of Saint John, by Sir Iſaac Newton, p. 10.

buchadnezzar's

buchadnezzar's dream in the ſecond chapter, which contains, as will be ſeen hereafter, the elementary part or ſyllabus of the whole of theſe prophecies.—I ſhall conſider the prophecies firſt, and afterwards the hiſtorical papers, ſo far as may be neceſſary.

Of the prophecies it is remarkable, that being enigmatically and ſeminally comprehended as it were, in the ſyllabus already mentioned, they are in the ſame enigmatical manner ſtill further drawn out in the ſeventh, eighth, and perhaps alſo ninth chapters; and at length unfolded in the eleventh and twelfth, without any clothing of that kind whatſoever. I ſhall therefore begin with theſe, as being probably the plaineſt, and more explicit than the former, only previouſly making ſome obſervation upon the tenth chapter, which is introductory.

Chap. x. 1, &c. *In the third year of Cyrus king of Perſia, a thing was revealed unto Daniel, (whoſe name was Belteſhazzar*) and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long, and he underſtood the thing, and had underſtanding of the viſion. In thoſe days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks*, or ſevens, (in the Hebrew, "ſevens of days."†) *I ate no pleaſant bread, neither was fleſh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myſelf at all, till three whole weeks*, "weeks of days," as before, *were fulfilled.*—Ver. 5th. *Then I lift up mine eyes,*

* Chap. i. 7.

† The weeks in the former, i. e. ninth chapter, being weeks or ſevens of years, ſeems to have ſuggeſted to the writer the propriety of ſuch an additional explanation.

and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whoſe loins were girt with fine gold of Uphaz. His body alſo was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to poliſhed braſs, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. Here the imagery is almoſt preciſely the ſame with that in the Revelation, chap. i. 13, &c. which may ſeem to have been in part copied from it. This, it is hoped, the reader will remember: Neither is the next verſe in another view much leſs remarkable; *And I Daniel ſaw alone the viſion; for the men that were with me ſaw not the viſion: but a great quaking fell upon them, ſo that they fled to hide themſelves.* I ſay not that there is in this paſſage, and in the 8th, 9th, and 10th verſes following, any thing to which St. Paul, in the account of his converſion, as given in Acts ix. 7th, 8th, and 9th verſes, may have had a reference; nor yet the contrary; the coincidence, however, of the one place with the other, may be thought remarkable. ——— Verſe 12th. *Then he ſaid unto me,* (the perſon in the viſion who had raiſed him upon his feet, as we read in the 10th and 11th verſes) *Fear not, Daniel: for from the firſt day that thou didſt ſet thine heart to underſtand, and to chaſten thyſelf, before God, thy words were heard, and I am come becauſe of thy words.* From this paſſage, compared with chap. ix. 21ſt, we ſeem to be taught, that the man clothed in linen, in ver. 5th, and who is now ſpeaking, was Gabriel; who,

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it ſeems, by what follows in verſes 13th and 21ſt, was a ſort of ſecond only to Michael, the peculiar patron of the Jewiſh people in the court of heaven; in which court the other people of Perſia and of Greece are ſuppoſed, in the other verſes, the 13th and 20th more eſpecially, to have had alſo their reſpective angels or protectors. Concerning which notion, its origin and conſonancy, or otherwiſe, with the other books of Scripture, I ſhall not preſume here to ſay any thing. The words of Jeſus, however, in Matthew xviii. 10, will be probably recollected upon this occaſion.

Chap. xi. 2. *And now will I ſhew thee the truth;* the ſimple unadorned truth, without any ſuch enigmatical covering as that under which it has been repreſented formerly; (referring, no doubt, to what we read in the ſecond, ſeventh, and eighth chapters;)——*Behold, there ſhall ſtand up yet three kings in Perſia,* meaning three beſides Cyrus, mentioned in chap. x. 1, *and the fourth ſhall be far richer than they all: and by his ſtrength, through his riches, he ſhall ſtir up all againſt the realm of Greece.* By theſe three kings Cambyſes, Smerdis, and Darius Hyſtaſpis, are acknowledged to be meant, and by the fourth, who ſhould ſtir up all againſt the realm of Greece, Xerxes, who is eminently known in hiſtory for having done ſo. See for ſuch proof of this as may be ſufficient for the preſent purpoſe, the very valuable work of Prideaux, entitled, *The Hiſtory of the Old and New Teſtament connected, &c;* under the years before Chriſt 485,

and

and following;* where alſo may be ſeen, under the ſeveral references reſpectively, ſufficiently full accounts, in the ſame view, of the *mighty king*, meaning Alexander the Great, mentioned in the third verſe;† and of the *diviſion* of his unwieldly and unſettled empire, after his deceaſe, and ſome commotions in his family, (which the prophecy does not notice) amongſt four of his captains, to wit, Lyſimachus, Caſſander, Seleucus, and Ptolemy; which is the ſubject of the fourth verſe;‡—and alſo of thoſe kings of the *north*, meaning Seleucus and his ſucceſſors in Syria, which lay to the north of Judæa; and of the *ſouth*, meaning Ptolemy of Egypt and his ſucceſſors, which is ſouth of Judæa; (to ſuch a degree is all here ſpoken relatively only) which are the ſubjects confeſſedly of the fifth verſe, and of all the following,§—to the thirty-firſt verſe; in which, according to ſome, and ſtrange no doubt as it muſt appear to others, the prophecy does all at once ceaſe to ſpeak of theſe, and go on, without any notice given, or ſenſible mark of tranſition, to

* Unleſs perchance, my reader, not much liking the labour of reſearch, may rather chooſe to content himſelf with Dr. Watts's *Short View of the Scripture Hiſtory*, chap. xix; which is indeed a brief, but very elegant abridgement of Prideaux's work; and ſufficient to ſuggeſt ſome few general and leading ideas only, concerning the affairs of the Jewiſh church and nation, in theſe times, to the inquiſitive in ſome degree, but not very anxious and learned reader.

† Under the years 356, 335, and following.

‡ Under the year 301.

§ For which ſee accordingly the ſame hiſtory under the years following.

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ſuch other, and very different and remote ones, as the conqueſt of Judæa by the Romans, the ſufferings of the firſt Chriſtians, Conſtantine and his ſucceſſors, Popery, Monkery, the Turks and Saracens, &c.— Of all which wonderful things, ſuppoſed to have been ſeen in theſe prophecies for the firſt time, at leaſt in ſo great a degree, by the pious and profoundly learned Mr. Mede, as the title page of his works calls him, and certainly with good reaſon, if this be indeed the caſe; and ſince approved by the great Sir Iſaac Newton, and divers eminent Divines, more eſpecially of late, in the church of England; I know not how, for my own part, to ſay leſs than this at preſent, that they ſeem to me to reſt upon no ſurer foundation than a feeble and very dubious criticiſm; to ſavour much of bigotry; and to lead, in the iſſue, to a palpable abſurdity. Of each of theſe ſome little illuſtration ſhall be attempted.

The criticiſm is in brief this, that *mim-ennu* in verſe 31ſt, tranſlated in our Bible, "on his part," (moſt literally of all, "from him") may ſignify "after him," meaning Antiochus Epiphanes, the perſon beginning to be ſpoken of in verſe 21ſt, and by confeſſion of all, continuing to be ſo, to this preſent; from whence the great philoſopher and others have been willing to ſuppoſe, that the *arms* mentioned in this verſe may intend, not thoſe of Epiphanes, but of the Romans, who, we are told, conquered Macedon, the fundamental kingdom of the Greeks, as it is quaintly called by theſe writers, about this time;* and who do in fact appear, by

* Obſervations, as before, p. 189.

what

what is ſaid of ſhips from Chittim, in verſe 30th, to have now begun to interfere in ſome degree in the affairs of theſe parts. But allowing the poſſibility of this, I mean, that the Hebrew word *may* be ſo tranſlated, (for *from* and *after* are certainly not the ſame) yet who ſees not how unjuſtifiable it needs muſt be, upon the evidence of ſuch an equivocal criticiſm only, (to ſay the moſt of it) to admit the coming in upon us of ſuch a new ſet of ideas, perſons and things; ſo contrary to the uniformity and regularity of the prophecy hitherto, and to the obvious tendency and bearing down of all the foregoing parts of it, to the ſtill further deſcription and characterizing of the ſame vile perſon, whom the 21ſt verſe mentions? whoſe ſubtilties and intrigues in Syria, and amongſt his own people, are next deſcribed in ver. 22d, 23d, and 24th; and afterwards his movements againſt the king of the South, or of Egypt, and the advantages he would gain over him, in thoſe that follow, to the 30th verſe: in which "ſhips from Chittim," that is, from the coaſts of Greece, as all allow, and ordered from thence by the Romans, to the relief of the king of Egypt, "come againſt him"? In conſequence of which he was obliged with *grief* and ſhame to *return* to his own land, and had ſuch *indignation againſt the holy covenant*, as is in the ſame verſe mentioned; and in order to the more particular deſcription of which, in the verſes following, all that has been before us hitherto, has been only bringing us. So uncritical would it ſeem to be to ſuffer ourſelves to be now diverted from the point to which

we

we have all along been tending!—The Jews, it ſeems, had offended him, by having ſhewn a ſenſible joy at an unfounded report of his death, during one of his invaſions of Egypt; upon which account, and for ſome other reaſons, he is ſaid to have reſolved, in his preſent diſconcerted and uneaſy ſtate of mind, to wreak his vengeance at leaſt upon them, a poor defenceleſs people, that lay in his way, and who had not yet any Romans in alliance with them, to defend them. This the text deſcribes very particularly. *So ſhall he do, he ſhall even return*, that is, from Egypt, *and have intelligence with them that forſake the holy covenant*; with Jaſon, Menelaus, and other apoſtate Jews, who joined with him againſt their own nation; as may be ſeen in Prideaux, and other writers. *And arms ſhall ſtand on his part*; ſo our tranſlators, who were not parties to any controverſy, nor probably thinking of any, and may therefore be ſuppoſed to have tranſlated with ſimplicity;*—or *from him*,

* But not ſo, it ſeems, a modern writer, whoſe words are theſe, *But mighty powers ſhall ſtand up*,—with too little attention paid to the ſimplicity of the original words, which our verſion does very well preſerve; and with too obvious a willingneſs to provide, in the text itſelf, for the introducement of ſuch a ſet of ideas, whether right or wrong, as could alone with propriety be brought forward in the notes. But I do not mean by this to imply any cenſure of Mr. Wintle's work, more than what concerns this paſſage only. I would rather make a very different obſervation. It is well known, that ſince the days of James the Firſt, when the preſent tranſlation was given to the public, ſome new controverſies have been moved, and others may poſſibly have aſſumed a new ſhape and form. I aſk then, whether, in caſe

him, if a literal tranſlation be neceſſary: *and they ſhall pollute the ſanctuary of ſtrength*, &c. The exactneſs here is obſervable, as, according to the moſt approved accounts, he did not himſelf come up againſt Jeruſalem in perſon, but detach *from* his army a body of twenty-two thouſand men, under Apollonius, one of his generals, to execute his purpoſe, while he proceeded in his return into Syria.—Of which Apollonius, his heinous impieties, and acts of atrocity, and of thoſe of others ſent after him, as referred to in the following verſes, very full accounts are given by Joſephus and others, and are well put together and arranged, in the uſeful writer more than once referred to.*

Of the want of candour in the ſyſtem I oppoſe, it may be ſufficient proof, perhaps, to mention the inſtance following; that according to it, the Pope is the King intended in ver. 36th, *who ſhall exalt and magnify himſelf above every God, and ſhall ſpeak marvellous things againſt the God of Gods, neither ſhall he regard the God of his fathers, nor any God.* Words which do indeed apply to this great perſecutor of the Jewiſh church and nation, Antiochus Epiphanes, as will be ſeen hereafter;

caſe of a new tranſlation of the Scriptures, this may not deſerve ſome conſideration? and whether, amidſt the arguments againſt the expediency of ſuch a meaſure, we may not be allowed to mention, as one, the too great likelihood, unleſs well guarded againſt, of ſuch an improper influence upon the mind, from hence ariſing, as we have now perhaps before us one inſtance of?

* See the Connection above mentioned, under years 168, and following, more particularly.

but

but ſurely not in any rational and ſober ſenſe to any of the Popes or Biſhops of Rome, not even the very worſt of them, in the worſt times; however juſtly we may complain of ſome of their extravagant pretenſions, more eſpecially in former days.—But this, though a valid obſervation, I reckon much inferior in force to the laſt of the three particulars above referred to; to the abſurdity, I mean, of that principle of interpretation to which it would lead us, and without which, it ſeems, it cannot be ſupported. In the twelfth chapter, ver. 6th, where the queſtion is aſked, *How long it ſhould be to the end of theſe wonders?* the anſwer is, *for a time, times, and half a time*, or, according to the phraſeology of this book, in ſome other paſſages *, for three years and a half, which was the exact time, according to Joſephus and others †, of the duration of this perſecution. But this, the reader obſerves, is not a ſpace by any means long enough for the purpoſes of Mr. Mede and his followers, and who have therefore taken care, after the example of Procruſtes of old, to ſtretch it to a more ſuitable length, by an expedient which, if it may be allowed them, is ſufficient perhaps for the purpoſe, and by no

* Chap. iv. 16, 23, 25, 32.

† "This," ſays Prideaux, ſpeaking of the dedication of the altar and temple by Judas Maccabæus, "was the very ſame "day of the year on which, three years before, it had been "profaned in the manner as above related, juſt *three years and* "*an half* after the city and temple had been deſolated by "Apollonius." Under year 165, where may be ſeen the authorities.

means

means wanting in ingenuity; by telling us, I mean, of a prophetic ſtyle, in which the word *day* ſignifies *year*, and thus giving us, reckoning the ancient years to have conſiſted of twelve months of thirty days each, no leſs a ſpace of time than one thouſand two hundred and ſixty years, for the full accompliſhment of theſe prophecies. Of which curious mode of interpretation, if the reader ſhall aſk for any thing like a principle to juſtify it, he will be referred, by the great philoſopher before mentioned, and the learned Biſhop of the ſame name, to Numb. xiv. 34; where, anſwerably to the days in which the land had been ſearched, ſo many years of chaſtiſement are threatened; and to Ezekiel iv. 1—6, where alſo every day of the prophet's propoſed and enigmatical ſuffering, anſwers to as many years of the Jewiſh people's iniquity. As if, arguing from theſe paſſages alone, the ſtyle in queſtion might not be as reaſonably called the hiſtorical as the prophetical!—As if from caſes ſo peculiar, and which have apparently no reference to any other without themſelves, and which cannot, without ſome expreſs authority for it, be further applied and drawn into precedent, any general rule for the interpretation of Scripture were deducible!——Or as if that could be called a ſtyle or language, whoſe whole vocabulary conſiſts of a ſingle word in a ſingle place only! For I do not find that the perſons abovementioned are accuſtomed ſo to explain the word *day* in the prophets univerſally, or have ever undertaken

undertaken ſo to do *. Moreover, if, in this prophetic ſtyle, the word day means year, what does year itſelf in the ſame ſtyle ſignify?

And yet I would not be underſtood to ſay, that this ſcheme of Mr. Mede, and ſome others, ſo very different from the interpretation of Grotius and the commentators, as I ſuppoſe, in general, is void of every appearance of reaſon and of plauſibility. To affirm this would be even injurious to my own argument: for who will believe that ſuch a man as he, the great Sir Iſaac Newton, and ſuch learned Biſhops as Newton, Hurd, Warburton, and ſome others, could be poſſibly impoſed upon by that which had in it no plauſibility whatſoever. Let me therefore make the needful conceſſions upon this occaſion. That the king then mentioned in ver. 36th, would *not regard the deſire of women*, is, I acknowledge, very prettily explained of the prohibitions of marriage, and of that ſtate of celibacy and monkery which is ſo much recommended, and in ſome caſes even inſiſted upon, in the church of Rome; were all other things in this context as eaſily, or but even tolerably well, explained upon the ſame general principle: Meantime that this Antiochus Epiphanes would not, in the

* In the *Obſervations* above mentioned, the title of chapter ii. is this, *Of the prophetic language*; which proves however nothing more than that the language of prophecy, like that of poetry, (if indeed there be much room for diſtinguiſhing between them) is figurative. But of any ſuch unmeaning and dull ſubſtitution of one word for another which is in no way better, but with reſpect to clearneſs worſe, nothing like an inſtance is brought forward.

violence of his proceedings againſt the devoted nation of the Jews, ſpare either *ſex* or *age*, nor let that *deſire* in particular be now of any influence upon him in any way whatſoever, is agreeable to the hiſtory, and may therefore be propoſed perhaps as an interpretation, not very harſh, nor as quite inadmiſſible; not to inſiſt upon Le Clerc's ſuggeſtion, which ſhould however be conſidered *. As

* " Nec *numen* quod amant mulieres," (nor *the Divinity* whom women love) ſays this writer; referring, as it ſhould ſeem, to the impious attempt of this prince upon the temple of *Diana* in Elymais, the Goddeſs to whom women in childbirth more eſpecially looked for aſſiſtance, according to the Heathen ſyſtem; (ſo Polybius and Joſephus tell the ſtory) or of *Venus*, according to Appian, which does not much change the argument; and for which there is this reaſon to be given, that it makes the paſſage to be expreſſive of his impiety, rather than of his cruelty, and ſo far of a piece with the context both before and after.——It is however in another view principally that I have made the quotation; as making a very clear diſcovery of the ideas of this great Biblical ſcholar upon the queſtion concerning the ſubject of theſe prophecies, though his decline of life did only permit him to finiſh his verſion, without the commentary, upon this and the remaining books of the Old Teſtament. In which view alſo the ſynopſis prefixed by him to his verſion of this chapter is obſervable. *Vaticinii Angeli de everſione imperii Perſarum, tum de Alexandri & ſucceſſorum ejus in Syria & Egypto regnis, ac præſertim de Syrorum rege qui Judæos male habiturus erat.* " An Angel foretels the overthrow of the " empire of the Perſians; next the kingdoms of Alexander and " of his ſucceſſors in Syria and Egypt, and of a king of Syria " more eſpecially who would afflict moſt grievouſly the Jewiſh " people."

I think it my duty to obſerve, that in the *Eſſays on Select Parts*, &c. mentioned above, this interpretation is adopted without any heſitation.

for

for the God *Mahuzzim*, of *fortreſſes*, *munitions*, or *ſtrong places*, in ver. 38th, with whom Mr. Mede and his followers make ſo much ado, nothing ſurely can be more eaſy than the explaining it of that Jupiter Olympius whoſe ſtatue and worſhip were ſet up by this great perſecutor in the temple of the true God at Jeruſalem, called the ſanctuary of *ſtrength*, in ver. 31ſt, as alſo upon the *mount* Gerizzim amongſt the Samaritans; and whoſe ſuppoſed ſeat upon the mountain Olympia in Greece, and in the Capitol at Rome, were eminently ſtrong places *; neither is there any difficulty in conceiving how this *Grecian* Jupiter may be ſaid to have been,

* Porphyry is ſuppoſed to have explained it of the God of Modim, (*Deum viculi Modim*, the God of the village Modim) and to ſomething of the ſame ſort Grotius ſeems alſo to incline, in whoſe note Maozim and Modim are ſuppoſed to be the ſame, and the place to have been ſo called from the Deity there worſhipped: but erroneouſly perhaps, the Deity being rather ſo called from the place; which might perhaps be his meaning. Modim, we may obſerve, was the place to which Mattathias and his ſons, with ſome other Jews, retired from the violence of the perſecution, and whither the officers of Antiochus purſued them, to compel them to do ſacrifice. And who then ſhould the God of Modim be but the ſame with him at Jeruſalem? or how could a Jewiſh prophet avoid to mention literally the Heathen Jupiter (or abomination that maketh deſolate, ſee ver. 31ſt) better, than by ſo decent a paraphraſis? So needleſs does it ſeem to me to ſuppoſe any more than one Heathen Deity or idol upon this occaſion. I know not how to omit obſerving, that Mr. Mede chooſes to give us *Mahuzzim*, though the word, I ſuppoſe, in all the ancient verſions is *Maozim*. Was this deſigned to hinder us from adverting to the eaſineſs of theſe gradual tranſitions, Maozim, Mozim, Modim, or can the reader ſuggeſt a more critical reaſon?

as he is called in ver. 39th, a *ſtrange* God; for ſuch he certainly was to the Jews and Syrians both; and in ver. 38th, *a God which his fathers*, the fathers or predeceſſors of Antiochus, *knew not*, that is, had never publickly owned and avowed as ſuch amongſt their Syrian ſubjects, whatever private knowledge, as Grecian princes originally, they might poſſibly have of him. And this the hiſtory confirms; in which Antiochus is ſpoken of as having been no leſs to his own ſubjects, than to the Jews, an innovator *.—And beſides theſe, I do not know, in favour of Mr. Mede's ſyſtem, any other very plauſible argument; unleſs it may be thought one, that in the reading of the 40th verſe we are led to expect, what in hiſtory, it ſeems, learned men do not find, *viz.* ſome other rencounter between Antiochus and the king of Egypt, ſubſequent to that which the 30th verſe mentions, and which would ſeem to have been the laſt. To which perhaps it may be ſufficient to reply, that the deſign being evidently this, to repreſent firſt the extreme power, and pride, and impiety, and then, in ſtrong contraſt

* "He iſſued out a decree," ſays Prideaux, "that all nations "within his dominions, leaving their former rites and uſages, "ſhould conform to the religion of the king, and worſhip the "ſame Gods, and in the ſame manner, as he did; which, "although couched in general terms, was levelled mainly "againſt the Jews.——And for the more effectual executing of "this decree he ſent overſeers into all the provinces of his "Empire to ſee to the obſervance of it, and to inſtruct the "people in all the rites which they were to conform to. And "all the Heathen nations readily obeyed his commands herein, "one ſort of idolatry being to them as acceptable as another;" &c. In *Connection*, as before.

with

with theſe, the awful and miſerable end of Epiphanes, the prophet ſeems in this verſe to bring the ſubject of the 30th verſe into view again, in order that the contraſt might be the more obſervable; as perhaps theſe firſt words of the 40th verſe, *And at the time of the end*, meaning when this perſecutor ſhould be coming to his end, and things by the Divine providence ſhould be in train for that purpoſe, were meant to ſignify. And ſo I obſerve divers others of good learning and judgement to have thought; of whoſe authority and words I ſhall here in part avail myſelf.

"Antiochus Epiphanes," ſays Prideaux, "having "been a great oppreſſor of the church of God "under the Jewiſh Oeconomy,——more is pro- "phetically ſaid of him in the prophecies of Daniel, "than of any other prince, which theſe prophecies "relate to; the better half of the eleventh chapter, "that is, from the 20th verſe to the 45th, which "is the laſt of that chapter, is wholly concerning "him, and there are ſeveral paſſages alſo in the "eighth and twelfth chapters, which relate to him. "The whole may be divided into two parts, whereof "the firſt is concerning his wars with Egypt, and "the ſecond is concerning the perſecutions and "oppreſſions brought by him upon the Jewiſh "church and nation, and theſe were all fulfilled in "the actions of his reign.

"And firſt as to his wars with Egypt, what is "ſaid—in the 26th verſe, was fulfilled by the revolt "of Ptolomy Macron from king Philometor, and "the treachery and mal-adminiſtration of Lenæus,

" Eulæus, and other miniſters and officers employed
" under him. What is in the 27th verſe had its
" completion in the meeting of Antiochus and
" Philometor at Memphis, where the two kings,
" both in the time of the ſecond and of the third
" expedition of Antiochus into Egypt, did fre-
" quently eat at the ſame table, and conferred
" together ſeemingly as friends, Antiochus pretend-
" ing to take upon him the care of the kingdom
" for the intereſt of Philometor his nephew, and
" Philometor pretending to confide in Antiochus
" as his uncle in all that he was thus doing. But
" both herein *ſpoke lies* to each other; for in reality
" they both intended quite the contrary. Anti-
" ochus's deſign being under the pretence above
" mentioned to ſeize all Egypt to himſelf, and
" Philometor's to take the firſt opportunity to
" diſappoint him of it, as accordingly at length he
" did, by his agreement with his brother and the
" Alexandrians, as is above related. Whereon
" followed what is foretold in the 29th and 30th
" verſes of the ſame chapter. For Antiochus, on
" his hearing of this agreement, pulled off his vizard,
" and openly avowed his deſign for the uſurping of
" Egypt to himſelf, and for the full executing of it,
" *returned and came again towards the ſouth*, that
" is, into Egypt, in his laſt expedition into that
" country. *But he did not then prevail, as in the*
" *former and the latter*, (i. e. in his two preceding)
" *attempts* upon that country, becauſe of the *ſhips*
" *that came from Chittim* (i. e. the country of the
" Grecians) *againſt him*, which brought Popillius
" Lænas,

" Lænas, and the other Roman ambaſſadors to " Alexandria, who made him to his great *grief to* " *return* out of Egypt, and quit all his deſigns upon " that country. However, what is foretold in the " 42d and 43d verſes, of *his ſtretching forth his* " *hand upon the land of Egypt, and his having* " *power over the treaſures of gold and ſilver, and* " *all other the precious things of that country*, had " its thorough completion. For he miſerably " harraſſed and waſted the whole land of Egypt in " all his expeditions into it, carrying thence vaſt " treaſures of gold and ſilver, and other riches, in " the prey and ſpoils taken in it by him and his " followers.——

" As to the other part of Daniel's prophecies of " this king, which relate to the perſecutions and " oppreſſions that he brought upon the Jewiſh " church and nation, what is ſaid, chap. xi. ver. 23d, " of *the prince of the covenant being broken before* " *him*, foreſhewed what he did to Onias the high " prieſt, who was depoſed and baniſhed by him, " and at length murthered by one of his lieutenants. " For the high-prieſt of the Jews was the prince of " the Moſaic covenant. What is ſaid in the 28th " verſe of *his heart being ſet againſt the holy* " *covenant, on his returning from Egypt*, and of " *the exploits which he did thereon*, foreſhewed " what he did to Judah and Jeruſalem on his return " from his ſecond expedition into the ſaid country " of Egypt; when, without a cauſe, he murthered and " enſlaved ſo many of the Jewiſh nation, and robbed " the city and temple of Jeruſalem of all their

" riches and treaſure. What is ſaid in the 30th " verſe, foretold the *grief with which he returned* " from his fourth and laſt expedition into Egypt, " by reaſon of the baffle which he then met with, " from the Romans, of all his deſigns upon that " country, and the *indignation* and wrath, which " then, in his irrational fury, he vented upon the " Jewiſh church and nation, in ſending Apollonius " to deſtroy Jeruſalem, and make to ceaſe the " Jewiſh worſhip in that place. What is contained " in the 31ſt verſe, and thoſe that follow to the " 40th,—foretold *his taking away the daily ſacri-* " *fice*, and all elſe that he did for the ſuppreſſing of " the Jewiſh worſhip, and the deſtroying of the " whole nation, which is above related. The 44th " verſe and the 45th of the ſame eleventh chapter, " foretold his laſt expedition which he made firſt " into Armenia, and from thence into the Eaſt, and " *his there coming to an end*, and periſhing in that " miſerable manner as has been related, having firſt " *planted the tabernacles of his palace*, that is, his " abſolute regal authority, *in the glorious holy* " *mountain between the ſeas*, that is in Jeruſalem, " which ſtood in a mountainous ſituation between " the Mediterranean ſea and the ſea of Sodom: " For it was built in the midway betwixt both, on " the mountains of Judea." See, as before, under the year 164, more eſpecially.

And to much the ſame purpoſe ſays another writer.* " The eleventh chapter contains a regular detail

* Mr. Abauzit, in a letter to William Burnet, Eſq. in his *Miſcellanies*, tranſlated by Harwood, p. 244, &c.

" of

" of the ſucceſſors of Alexander the Great, in Egypt
" under the kings of the South, and in Syria under
" the name of the kings of the North, (this is their
" reſpective ſituation in regard to Judæa) till the
" time of Antiochus Epiphanes, whoſe perſon and
" actions are characterized from the twenty-firſt
" verſe; his abjectneſs, his flattery, his intrigues to
" mount the throne, his various expeditions into
" Epypt, the laſt rendered ineffectual by the Ro-
" mans, his vexation on this account, his madneſs,
" which ſpent itſelf on the Jews, the pollution of
" the ſanctuary, the ceſſation of the daily ſacrifice,
" and in its place the abomination of deſolation,
" which it is of the laſt importance to remark,
" as well as the other circumſtances of this horrible
" perſecution, related to the fortieth verſe, where
" the angel recapitulates in a few words the actions of
" Antiochus, and his unhappy end. Afterwards he
" continues the ſame ſubject in the following chap-
" ter, verſe 1. *And at that time ſhall Michael*
" *ſtand up, the great prince who ſtandeth for the*
" *children of thy people* † ; that is, in the time of
" this perſecution of Antiochus, which in effect had
" never its equal. Then in the ſecond and third
" verſes he predicts ſhame and diſgrace to apoſtacy,
" and glory to that perſevering courage which fixed
" the crown in the Aſmonean family. At laſt, in
" the ſeventh verſe, he informs the prophet that this

† Is not this a conſiderable proof, of the internal and collateral kind, that the Jewiſh church and nation are ſtill the ſubject? For why elſe is Michael now mentioned? See before, chap. x. 21.

" per-

" perſecution would continue, a *time, times, and*
" *half a time*, that is, three years and a half,
" which is exactly its duration, from the arrival of
" Apollonius, the executioner of Antiochus's mad-
" neſs, to the purification of the ſanctuary, as Joſe-
" phus expreſsly calculates it in two places, and it
" is alſo manifeſt from the books of the Maccabees.
" The angel gives a fuller explication at the eleventh
" verſe: *From the time*, ſays he, *the daily ſacrifice*
" *ſhall be taken away, and the abomination that*
" *maketh deſolate be ſet up; there ſhall be a thou-*
" *ſand, two hundred, and ninety days*; which juſt
" make theſe three years and a half. Obſerve, I beſeech
" you, with regard to this ceſſation of the ſacrifice
" and the abomination, that he employs the ſame
" terms, and underſtands the ſame thing of which
" he had already ſpoken at the 31ſt verſe of the
" preceding chapter, which undoubtedly reſpects
" only the perſecution of Antiochus, and which
" conſequently ought not to be explained, but in
" the ſame manner in the twelfth chapter. Accord-
" ing to your hypotheſis, my dear friend, theſe
" 1290 days intend ſo many years; and I believe
" this may be true: but you have not proved that
" ſcheme to be erroneous which underſtands them
" of natural days. At leaſt, it is acknowledged on
" both ſides, that *a time, two times, and half a*
" *time*, are a year, two years, and half a year; and
" it is a thing yet unheard of in the ſtyle of the
" ſacred penmen, that a *time* or year ſhould be
" taken for 360 years.—Moreover, when after hav-
" ing ſaid that the daily ſacrifice ſhould be inter-

" rupted

" rupted during 1290 days, he adds, in the twelfth " verſe, *Bleſſed is he that waiteth and cometh to* " *the thouſand, three hundred, and thirty-five* " *days*, he does not lengthen the firſt term of 45 " days but in order to mark the death of Antio- " chus, which happened a little after the re-eſtab- " bliſhment of divine ſervice; or indeed he marks " the time employed in fortifying the temple and " ſecuring it from inſults, as is ſaid 1 Mac. iv. 60. " With regard to the paſſage, chap. viii. 14. in which " the interruption of the daily ſacrifice is to con- " tinue two thouſand, three hundred mornings and " evenings, there is, I own, a great difficulty, which " perhaps would never have exiſted had it not been " for the bad punctuation of the Maſoretes. For " if one reads, without points,—one may as well " tranſlate it, *a thouſand, three hundred, evenings* " *and mornings*, as Montanus has done, that is, " 1300 days, a round number for 1290. *"—So

* The notion of Grotius was different, and perhaps leſs approaching to preciſion. " *Unto two thouſand and three hundred* " *days*. This period of about ſix years begins with the firſt " Jewiſh troubles by Antiochus, and takes in the whole of " them;" Grotius in loc. And very different from both is the explication of the author of the *Eſſays* before mentioned; who chooſes to underſtand theſe days of thoſe which paſſed from the acceſſion of Antiochus to the beginning of the perſecution; as if the queſtion were this, How long ſhall be the peaceable continuance of the daily ſacrifice, and of the tranſgreſſions, till interrupted? obſerving, that theſe, added to the 1290 of perſecution, and the additional 45, give a period of ten years, one month, and five days, which he ſuppoſes to be the exact duration of the reign of Epiphanes. The notion is certainly curious, and very proper to be conſidered by any one who ſhould undertake an exact and complete commentary.

this

this particularly ingenious writer; from whom I have been glad to tranſcribe ſo much, not only becauſe not ſo well known, nor in ſo many hands as Prideaux, but for this other reaſon alſo, that the comments of Grotius, with whom he agrees, and whoſe ſenſe of the twelfth chapter he has in ſubſtance given, are yet untranſlated from the Latin.

But if ſuch be the meaning of the eleventh and twelfth, it muſt be ſo ſubſtantially of the former and more enigmatical chapters of this book, the ſubjects of them all being confeſſedly the ſame, and the difference in the mode of expreſſion only. And therefore in the *ſeventh* chapter in particular, by the *little horn*, in which *were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth ſpeaking great things*, ver. 8th; *which made war with the ſaints, and prevailed againſt them*, ver. 21ſt; and ſhould *ſpeak great words againſt the Moſt High, and wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High, and think to change times and laws; and they ſhould be given into his hand, until a time, times, and the dividing of a time*, ver. 25th; we are to underſtand, and can only underſtand, Antiochus Epiphanes, in whom we have already ſeen theſe ſeveral characteriſtics to have been verified, and the *time, times*, and *dividing of a time* more eſpecially;—and of conſequence, by the fourth beaſt, or kingdom, ſo *dreadful and terrible*, that is to the Jews, and *diverſe from all the other* or former, that is, in reſpect to them,

(for

(for all here is relative) not the fourth of the *four great monarchies*, as ſome learned men have been wont to ſpeak, thus explaining upon the general and broad ſcale of univerſal hiſtory what is to be explained with a reference to the Jewiſh nation only;* but that of Syria, or rather of Syria and Egypt; which may be ſaid to have been one only in reſpect of the Jews, and is accordingly ſo ſpoken of in chap. viii. 23d, and a fourth alſo, conſidered as diſtinct and different from Alexander's, as it evidently is in theſe prophecies †;—and muſt of conſequence underſtand, by the *ten* horns previous to this little horn, and before which *three* are ſaid to have fallen or been plucked up, ſome ten Kings in particular of this common Grecian kingdom, who may have been perhaps more hoſtile to the Jews than the reſt; unleſs we will rather chooſe to ſuppoſe a round and

* So, for inſtance, in the eleventh chapter we have ſeen the Kings of Syria, to be called the Kings of the North, and thoſe of Egypt to be called the Kings of the South, becauſe they were ſo in reſpect of Judea, and certainly not for any other reaſon. And ſee in the next note another inſtance.

† See the ſtrong language upon this ſubject in chap. xi. 4. and again in chap. viii. 22; in which alſo obſerve this other remarkable particular, that the ſhares or diſtricts of Lyſimachus and Caſſander, having no connection with Judea, are not any further noticed in theſe prophecies. To ſuch a degree is all relative. I may add ſtill further, that in 1 Maccabees i. 10th, Antiochus is ſaid to have reigned, that is, begun to do ſo, in "the 137th year of the kingdom of the Greeks," meaning of the kingdom and era which began in Seleucus. Can the reader wiſh for clearer evidence?

certain

certain number to be put for a broken one, which may perhaps be the caſe*. And ſo alſo is the viſion of the ram and he-goat in the *eighth* chapter to be explained, and of the little horn there mentioned, *which waxed exceeding great, toward the South, and toward the Eaſt, and toward the pleaſant land,*

* The princes who had reigned in Syria before Antiochus Epiphanes were 1. *Seleucus Nicator*; 2. Antiochus Soter; 3. *Antiochus Theus*; 4 *Seleucus Callinicus*; 5. Seleucus Ceraunus; 6. *Antiochus Magnus*; 7. *Seleucus Philopator*;—to whom ſucceeded (to the excluſion of the right heir, Demetrius Soter, then abſent from the kingdom) Antiochus Epiphanes.

In Egypt theſe, 1. *Ptolomy Soter*; 2. *Ptolomy Philadelphus*; 3. *Ptolomy Euergetes*; 4. *Ptolomy Philopator*; 5. *Ptolomy Epiphanes*, To whom we may add, if we pleaſe, Ptolomy Philometor; who was however more properly the contemporary and rival, than a predeceſſor, of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Of theſe it is remarkable, that the *ten* whoſe names are in *italics* are expreſsly referred to in the eleventh chapter. See the Commentators. And why not then ſuppoſe *them* to be the ten here meant?

According to Grotius, the *three* plucked up were Seleucus Philopator, Demetrius Soter, and Ptolomy Epiphanes, as he muſt certainly have meant, by whatever overſight Ptolomy Philopator is now in the copies. Inſtead of whom however I would rather mention, if I might, Heliodorus, the treaſurer of Syria, (they will be then all Syrians,) who, though no heir at all, made however ſuch advances towards the crown as ſufficiently to alarm Epiphanes, and to juſtify perhaps the ſuppoſition of a reference to him in the prophecy.

Cornua eminent in animantibus, ſic in populo reges; ſays Grotius. "As the horn is to the beaſt, ſo is a king amongſt his ſubjects." Such no doubt is the idea upon which the metaphorical repreſentation is founded both here and in the next chapter, though not perhaps there in the ſtricteſt manner adhered to, as may be ſeen in the note following.

(which

(which are almoſt literal tranſcripts of correſponding paſſages in the eleventh chapter) and even to the *hoſt* and *ſtars* of heaven, as the prieſts and Levites of the temple, in alluſion to the ſuppoſed dignity and regularity of their miniſtries there, are here elegantly called; of the deſtruction, I mean, of the Perſian, or rather Medo-perſian empire * by Alexander, and of the riſe of this perſecuting prince from amongſt his ſucceſſors; or rather is ſo explained in the prophecy itſelf afterwards, in the 20th verſe and following: And, of conſequence, ſuch muſt alſo be the meaning in general of that ſyllabus or ſynopſis of the whole of theſe prophecies, which is given in the *ſecond* chapter, and of which, upon that account, ſome further notice ſhall be taken.

Verſe 31ſt. *Thou, O king, ſaweſt, and behold a great image: this great image, whoſe brightneſs was excellent, ſtood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold,*

* The mother of Cyrus, the founder of the Perſian empire, was the daughter of Aſtyages, King of Media, to which kingdom he ſucceeded after the death of Cyaxares, the ſon of Aſtyages. Hence ſome ſeeming violation perhaps and breaking in, in ver. 3d, upon the very juſt and expreſſive repreſentation of horn for King which is ſo well preſerved in chap. vii. and not wholly departed from in this. Upon this account alſo the ſecond beaſt, or bear, in chap. vii. 5th, is ſaid to have *raiſed up itſelf on one ſide*, referring to the prevalence of the Perſian over the Median character and name in the iſſue, which ſeems not to have been the caſe at firſt; for in the book of Eſther the Medes are uſually firſt mentioned. Note alſo, that the Cyaxares, above mentioned, is uſually ſuppoſed to be the ſame with Darius the Mede, of whom we read in the 9th and 11th chapters.

his

his breaſt and his arms of ſilver, his belly and his thighs of braſs, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou ſaweſt till that a ſtone was cut out without hands, which ſmote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces, &c. *This is the dream, and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.*

Thou, O king,—art this head of gold; meaning, that the kingdom or empire which he repreſented was ſo, the empire of the Babylonians. *And after thee,* or thine; thy line or race; *ſhall ariſe another kingdom inferior to thee,* meaning the Perſian or Medo-perſian empire; which was not, according to the ancient writers, equal in power and extent to the Babylonian, and is therefore only repreſented by the bear, while the ſymbol of the Babylonian is a lion, in the ſeventh chapter:—*And another third kingdom of braſs,* that is, another and third in ſucceſſion, reckoning thine the firſt; *which ſhall bear rule over all the earth:* This anſwers to the leopard in the ſeventh chapter, and moſt plainly intends, as that alſo does, the empire of Alexander. It is the ſame alſo with the he-goat in the eighth chapter, whoſe movements repreſent, in a ſtill more pictureſque and lively manner than even the wings of the leopard do, the rapid and deciſive victories of that conqueror.

Verſe 40th. *And the fourth kingdom,* meaning that of the ſucceſſors of Alexander in Syria and Egypt, whoſe kingdoms we have before ſeen to be ſpoken of as one only, in reſpect of common riſe, ſimultaneous

ſimultaneous exiſtence, and ſameneſs, to the Jews more eſpecially; *ſhall be ſtrong as iron*, (in the correſpondent language of the ſeventh chapter, "dreadful and terrible,") *forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and ſubdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all theſe*, gold, ſilver, and braſs, *ſhall it break in pieces, and bruiſe;* meaning, no doubt, the Jewiſh people more eſpecially.* *And whereas thou ſaweſt the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron; the kingdom*, this fourth kingdom, *ſhall be divided*, or be a divided one, *but* ſtill *there ſhall be in it of the ſtrength of the iron*, that is, in reſpect of the Jewiſh people, and notwithſtanding this divided and weakened property of it ſo far, *forasmuch as thou ſaweſt the iron mixed with the clay*, or ſtrength and weakneſs as it were blended with each other. *And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay; ſo the kingdom ſhall be partly ſtrong, and partly broken;* that is, will not in both its parts be either ſtrong or weak at the ſame time, but by alternation of the parts, and as ſometimes one and ſometimes the other ſhall have the advantage. Unleſs we will rather chooſe to explain the paſſage of ſuch a want of cement as it were, and mutual union and connection, as the next words ſo well expreſs, and which the mention again

* It is obſerved by Joſephus, and has been often quoted from him in this view, that in the conflicts between Syria and Egypt the Jews were like a ſhip in a ſtorm, which is toſſed by the waves on both ſides, and almoſt ſure to ſuffer, which ever was victorious. Antiq. xii. ch. 3. ſect. 3. The caſe was not always ſo, but the exceptions to it were partial only, and proceeded from no laſting and good principle.

of the iron and clay may ſeem to confirm: *And whereas, thou ſaweſt iron mixed with miry clay, they ſhall mingle themſelves with*, or by means of, *the ſeed of men*, or by means of inter-marriages; ſhall at leaſt endeavour to do; *but they ſhall not cleave one to another*, or be able to cement a laſting and cordial alliance by this means, *even as iron is not mixed with clay*. See before in chap. xi. 6th, and again in ver. 17th, the cleareſt illuſtration of this; and from the whole together, ſuch proof of this fourth kingdom being that of the Syrians and Egyptians, as now under the government of their reſpective Græcian princes, as abundantly ſatisfies, I muſt needs ſay, my own mind, and ſhould methinks be in like manner convincing to the generality of readers. I ſhall now therefore turn to the conſideration of the firſt ſix chapters, or of the hiſtorical papers, as the great philoſopher has called them, which introduce theſe prophecies; and which cannot be ſaid to be of no importance to the explication of them, the remaining part of them more eſpecially.

Chapter the *firſt* is an account of the removal of Daniel, with other Jewiſh captives, from Jeruſalem to Babylon, when the former city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar; of his being choſen, with three others, more eſpecially, on account of their comelineſs, and other promiſing appearances, to ſtand before the king;—of their previous preparation for this, under the direction of the maſter of the eunuchs, during a ſpace of three years;—and of the ſucceſs with which this deſign was attended. See the firſt

fourteen

fourteen verſes of the chapter.—Ver. 15th. *And at the end of ten days,* (this the preceding verſes will explain) *their countenances appeared fairer, and fatter in fleſh, than all the children,* or other young perſons, *which did eat the portion of the king's meat.—And the king communed with them: and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Miſhael, and Azariah: therefore ſtood they,* were from that time appointed to do ſo, *before the king. And in all matters of wiſdom and underſtanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and aſtrologers that were in all his realm.* It is no wonder, conſidering what the 17th verſe mentions. *As for theſe four children, God gave them knowledge, and ſkill in all learning and wiſdom, and Daniel had underſtanding in all viſions and dreams;* which it ſeems from hence, and what will be ſeen in the next chapter, was the learning more particularly of the Chaldeans, mentioned in verſe 4th, in which theſe young Jews were to be inſtructed, and in which Daniel, by the Divine favour, rather than by the ordinary means, is ſuppoſed to have made uncommon proficiency.—Ver. 21ſt. *And Daniel continued,* or ſo Daniel continued, in ſuch pre-eminence and fame, as well as life, *even unto the firſt year of Cyrus;* that is, till the end of the captivity, and as we learn from chap. x. 1. till at leaſt full two years after.*

Of

* The perſons whoſe hiſtory has been above given are called *children* in the 4th and 17th verſes, and we may hence infer with what good reaſon. Allowing for the captivity in Babylon 70

Of this ſuperiority in Daniel over all the other wiſe men of the kingdom, the *ſecond* chapter contains a very extraordinary illuſtration; and an account of ſuch a partiality in the king towards him, and even cruelty in this reſpect to his own people, as may ſeem at the firſt view almoſt unaccountable. Having dreamed a dream of which the particulars were gone from him, and of which the trouble of mind into which he was caſt, was the only effect remaining; he was ſo unreaſonable as to demand of his own wiſe men, upon the peril of being cut in pieces if they failed, both what it was, and the interpretation. Nothing ſurely could be more abſurd and cruel, according to modern ideas, than all this was: it made way however, for the fineſt diſplay imaginable of the wiſdom of Daniel, of which an account may be ſeen at large in the chapter. I extract, as ſufficient for the preſent deſign, the 46th and following verſes only. *Then*, that is, after the recovery and interpretation of the dream by Daniel, *the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worſhipped Daniel, and commanded that they ſhould offer an oblation and ſweet odours unto him.* This is rather wonderful, conſidering that nothing which Daniel had ſpoken of (unleſs the recovery of the loſt dream may be reckoned an exception) could yet have come to paſs, and that a part of what he had ſaid (ſee ver. 39th,) could not, as one is apt to

years, and to Daniel theſe two or three years more, we cannot ſuppoſe him to have been now ſo much as twenty, but by aſſigning to him a length of life, far beyond what is attained to by men in general.

imagine,

imagine, have been, to ſuch a capricious and cruel prince, as this chapter repreſents Nebuchadnezzar to have been, the moſt agreeable; neither again is Daniel's acceptance of ſuch homage, if he did accept, or the omitted mention of his refuſal, if he did refuſe, much leſs wonderful. It is added, ſtill in the ſame ſtyle and manner, *The king anſwered unto Daniel, and ſaid, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of ſecrets, ſeeing thou couldeſt reveal this ſecret.* It was therefore, perhaps, not ſo much Daniel himſelf, as the God whom he ſerved, that Nebuchadnezzar meant to worſhip, and thus to honour in the perſon of his miniſter; which may ſeem to make the matter, of acceptance or otherwiſe, not quite ſo wonderful. *Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wiſe men of Babylon. Then Daniel requeſted of the king, and he ſet Shadrach, Meſhech, and Abednego,* (the three brethren of Daniel, according to their new names in chap. i. 7,) *over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel ſat in the gate of the king;* was not permitted to leave the Court, where he was in much authority and favour, as Eſther v. 13th, may lead us to explain.

But the whole of this, it ſeems, both the king's new religious ſentiments, and his extraordinary favours to theſe perſons, was but of ſhort continuance, as we learn from the *third* chapter. *Nebuchadnezzar the king*, it is there ſaid, *made an image*

of gold, whoſe height was threeſcore cubits, and the breadth thereof, ſix cubits: and he ſet it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king ſent to gather together the princes, the governours, and the captains, the judges, the treaſurers, the counſellors, the ſheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had ſet up. Then the princes, &c. were gathered together, and they ſtood before the image which Nebuchadnezzar had ſet up. Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the ſound of the cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of muſic, ye fall down and worſhip the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath ſet up. And whoſo falleth not down and worſhippeth, ſhall the ſame hour be caſt into the midſt of a burning fiery furnace. Therefore, at that time, when all the people heard, &c.—certain Chaldeans came near and accuſed the Jews. They ſpake and ſaid to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. There are certain Jews whom thou haſt ſet over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego: theſe men, O king, have not regarded thee, they ſerve not thy gods, nor worſhip the golden image which thou haſt ſet up. Then Nebuchadnezzar, in his rage and fury, commanded to bring Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego: then they brought theſe men before the king. After which the ſtory goes on to tell, how he boaſted of his own gods before them, and

inſulted

inſulted theirs, notwithſtanding his having, in the laſt chapter, done the very oppoſite;——how theſe ſteady men to their own religion and laws, were caſt into the fiery furnace, which was now, we are told, that is, in conſequence of the pertinacity and firmneſs of theſe men, heated ſeven times hotter than before;——and how, in the ſequel, they were preſerved unhurt in it, and at laſt called from it by this Nebuchadnezzar himſelf, by means and under circumſtances of an extraordinary nature, which may be ſeen at large in the following verſes. And then this whole chapter finiſhes, much in the ſame manner as the former did, by a ſolemn acknowledgement, on the part of Nebuchadnezzar, of the greatneſs and ſuperiority in power of the God of Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, and a decree in his favour; and the reſtoration of theſe perſons themſelves to their former places and preferments. Of all which wonderful things, from the beginning to the end of this chapter, and ſome of them not very eaſy to be accounted for, there can be no hazard, I preſume, in ſaying this much of them, that they are of ſuch a ſort as any Jew may be ſuppoſed to record, and all the Jews to read with pleaſure.

And, with the ſame remark, I may be allowed, perhaps, to paſs over, without much enlargement, what we read in the *fourth* chapter. It is a decree of Nebuchadnezzar's, made upon an occaſion which is very particularly related in it, in which Daniel again appears as an interpreter of dreams, much in the ſame light as before in chap. ii; and in which Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgements of the moſt

high God are no leſs extraordinary. And ſo alſo, perhaps, what we read in the *fifth* chapter may be beſt conceived of. *Belſhazzar the king*, it is there ſaid, *made a great feaſt to a thouſand of his lords, and drank wine before the thouſand. Belſhazzar, while he taſted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and ſilver veſſels, which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jeruſalem, that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines might drink therein.— Then they brought the golden veſſels that were taken out of the temple of the houſe of God, which was at Jeruſalem; and the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines drank in them. They drank wine, and praiſed the Gods of gold, and of ſilver, of braſs, of iron, of wood, and of ſtone.— In the ſame hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over againſt the candleſtick, upon the plaiſter of the wall of the king's palace; and the king ſaw the part of the hand that wrote.*—— The reſt almoſt follows of courſe. The king is troubled; the magicians and wiſe men are ſent for, with the ſame ſucceſs as before; and laſt of all Daniel, who, as the reader will ſuppoſe, explains the writing.——Verſe 29th, *Then commanded Belſhazzar*, that is, immediately after Daniel had told him, in the midſt of his feſtivity, that God had *numbered his kingdom*, and *finiſhed* it; that he was *weighed in the balances*, and *found wanting*; and that his *kingdom was divided, and given to the Medes and Perſians*;——"Then commanded Belſhazzar," ſays the ſtory, *and they clothed Daniel with*

with ſcarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he ſhould be the third ruler in the kingdom. This, though it had been promiſed, (ſee verſe 7th) one may think ſo licentious and riotous a prince as Belſhazzar would have been little inclined to do, in reward of ſuch unwelcome information as Daniel had given him; and the rather, as it was now, in caſe the prophet was believed, or believed himſelf, ſo very needleſs to be done; eſpecially conſidering what is ſaid in the next verſe, *In that night was Belſhazzar the king of the Chaldeans ſlain.* So uncommonly rapid muſt have been the execution of the king's orders, as well as now the needleſsneſs, and almoſt abſurdity of them; as may poſſibly ſeem to ſome readers.—Verſe 31ſt. *And Darius the Median*, the uncle of Cyrus, as we have above ſuppoſed, upon chap. viii. *took the kingdom, being about threeſcore and two years old.*

It immediately follows in the *ſixth* and laſt of theſe introductory chapters, *It pleaſed Darius to ſet over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes*, (or perhaps an hundred and twenty ſeven, ſuppoſing one for each province, as we may conjecture from Eſther i. 1.*) *which ſhould be over the whole*

* Another particular in this chapter is alſo remarkable; we have mention made in it, no leſs than three times, of the laws of the Medes and Perſians being unalterable, a notion much inſiſted upon in the book of Eſther; ſee alſo before upon chap. ii. ult. To thoſe who may wiſh to conſider critically the authenticity of theſe books, I reckon theſe coincidences to be not immaterial.

kingdom;

kingdom; and over theſe, three preſidents (of whom Daniel was firſt) that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king ſhould have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the preſidents and princes, becauſe an excellent ſpirit was in him, and the king thought to ſet him over the whole realm. All this being admitted, which, the change in the government conſidered, may be reckoned wonderful, what follows is natural enough. *Then the preſidents and princes ſought to find occaſion againſt Daniel,* &c. The hiſtory then goes on to mention ſuch a ſnare laid for him, on account of his religion, as is not wholly unlike what we have before ſeen in chap. iii.;—a ſomewhat ſimilar deliverance, of the miraculous kind, wrought for him;—and the like kind of royal proclamation, in favour of the God of Daniel, to thoſe mentioned in the ſecond, third, and fourth chapters, upon not very different occaſions.—*So this Daniel proſpered,* it is ſaid in verſe the laſt, *in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Perſian;* under all ſucceſſions and revolutions in government equally, and with the exception only of ſuch diſaſters as eventually tended to his own greater honour, and that of his nation.

And now, how far ſuch hiſtorical papers as theſe may be ſuppoſed to recommend the following ones of prophecy, or to produce in any degree within the reader's mind a ſomewhat different prepoſſeſſion, may be no improper ſubject of conſideration. The reader will bear with me, I hope, while I lay together, in this view, a few particulars.

Porphyry,

Porphyry, it ſeems, as we are informed by Jerome, denied the authenticity of theſe prophecies, affirming that all in them to the time of Epiphanes had the clearneſs of hiſtory, and really was ſo, though prophetically written, and that all which was aimed at after this time was conjecture, or rather overweening pride and prejudice only; and from thence inferring, that the whole was the work of ſome Jew, who lived probably not very long after this time, and who availed himſelf of a celebrated name *, in order to ſerve and do credit, as it ſhould ſeem, to his religion and nation. But as Porphyry, though learned and virtuous, was an enemy to Chriſtianity, and influenced not a little probably by this prejudice, I ſhall not repoſe much upon his authority; nor again, and for much the ſame reaſon, upon that of Mr. Anthony Collins, who appears to have thought in much the ſame way upon theſe prophecies; he alſo lying under the charge of what may be called modern heatheniſm, that is, Deiſm, and having certainly had various and violent conteſts with the clergy, whatever may be thought of his Chriſtianity. But of Dr. Richard Bentley, a celebrated critic and Divine, perhaps a leſs invidious notice may be taken, and of whom it ſeems to be now received, and aſcertained by an evidence ſufficiently credible †, that

* Ezekiel xxviii. 3. xiv, 14.

† Mr. Whiſton; of whom we thus read, under the article Bentley, in the Biographia.——"Dr. Bentley, it ſeems, was "not ſatisfied with the explications which had been given by "Biſhop Lloyd and others, with regard to the prophecies of "Daniel, and the Revelations. Nay, according to Mr. "Whiſton, he expreſſed ſome doubts concerning the Divine "authority

that he alſo doubted of theſe prophecies. And if ſo, to what other cauſe may we ſo reaſonably aſcribe it in him, as to ſomething or other of that juſt diſcernment, critical acumen, and true reliſh of authorſhip, (whether in this inſtance rightly exerciſed, or otherwiſe, is the only queſtion) which led him to reject the *Epiſtles of Phalaris*, and other confeſſedly ſuppoſititious works? And why then may we not ſuppoſe, that, in this caſe, ſuch a tendency in theſe hiſtorical papers to gratify the religious prejudices and national pride of the Jews, and to raiſe them high in their own and others good opinion, as has been above obſerved, may have had its weight with him, and been one at leaſt of his inducements? To which perhaps ſome others may be added; as, ſecondly, the certain knowledge which we have that the Jews in thoſe times to which this objection has a reference, were not only capable of, but even expert in compoſitions of this kind; of which

" authority of thoſe books themſelves; and when he was " courting his lady, who was a moſt excellent Chriſtian woman, " he had like to have loſt her, by ſtarting to her an objection " againſt the book of Daniel. From certain ſuggeſtions of this " kind, Mr. Whiſton charges Dr. Bentley with having been " ſceptical with reſpect to Revelation. But there doth not " appear, to us, to be ſufficient ground for the charge. A man " might heſitate concerning many points of faith firmly cre- " dited by Mr. Whiſton, without an impeachment of his own " belief of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Scriptures. Neither could " ſuch an impeachment juſtly ariſe from any doubts which " might be entertained concerning the Divine authority of a " particular book of the Old or New Teſtament. Mr. Whiſton's " credulity, and his zealous attachment to his peculiar fancies, " rendered him of all men the moſt likely to be miſtaken in a " ſubject of this nature." Dr. Kippis's ed.

both

both Joſephus, and the books commonly called Apochrypha, ſeem to ſupply very clear inſtances*; and, thirdly, the more particular preſumption which in this caſe ariſes from that which divines of all churches ſeem to be agreed in, that the original of this book is part in Hebrew and part in Chaldee; in which latter all the Apochryphal books are ſaid to have been written, ſave ſuch as were in the firſt inſtance Greek only: from whence ſome perhaps may think the inquiry to be not without reaſon, whether it

* See in Joſephus the flattering and ſtrange ſtory concerning Jaddua the high prieſt, and his interview with Alexander, in the Antiquities, book 11. chap. viii. ſect. 3, 4, 5; derived to him no doubt from theſe times; and of which the baſis may perhaps have thus much of truth in it, that the high prieſt in perſon, or by ſome deputy, may have made early ſubmiſſions to, and was therefore favourably received by, this rapid and capricious conqueror: and as one inſtance only from the books called Apochrypha, the *Wiſdom of Solomon*; upon which the following remarks of a celebrated modern writer are pertinent, not only to this, but to the ſubjects alſo of ſome former chapters. Having mentioned how ſome of the Jews of Alexandria applied themſelves to the philoſophy of Plato, "But "their national pride would have been mortified," ſays Mr. Gibbon, "by a fair confeſſion of their former poverty; "and they boldly marked, as the ſacred inheritance of their "anceſtors, the gold and jewels which they had ſo lately "ſtolen from their Egyptian maſters. One hundred years "before the birth of Chriſt, a philoſophical treatiſe, which "manifeſtly betrays the ſtyle and ſentiments of the ſchool of "Plato, was produced by the Alexandrian Jews, and unanimouſly received as a genuine and valuable relic of the "inſpired Wiſdom of Solomon. A ſimilar union of the Moſaic faith and Grecian philoſophy diſtinguiſhes the works of "Philo, which were compoſed, for the moſt part, under the "reign of Auguſtus." Rom. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 239.

may

may be beſt reckoned with the Canonical or the Apochryphal? This however is ſuch a conſideration as might ſeem to be of no very great weight, the book of Ezra being known and confeſſed to be of the ſame mixed kind, were there not, with reſpect to Daniel, this particularly diſcriminating circumſtance, that we have in it ſuch appropriate names of angels as Gabriel and Michael, as we have alſo in the Apochrypha thoſe of Raphael and Uriel; which is not the caſe in any other of the books of the Old Teſtament. Upon the ſubject alſo of ſameneſs, in ſome inſtances, between this book and that of Eſther, as noticed above, ſome little matter of argument might be perhaps in this view grounded, were it neceſſary that every thing ſhould be mentioned*; but I rather chooſe to ſubjoin another, and very different, conſideration; the difficulty, as it has ſeemed to ſome, of explaining to ſatisfaction the *fifth*

* The very great improbability of the ſtory in itſelf (though not perhaps wholly void of ſome little truth in its foundation) and the very ſtrong tendency in it to flatter the Jews, muſt be obvious to all readers; and may perhaps, in connection with ſome other things, have brought down upon it this bold and probably juſt cenſure of an able writer?—*ſub Perſis vix quidquam Judæis adverſi accidit, quæque in Eſtheræ libro narrantur, ſi modo vera ſunt (nec enim diſſimulo de Eſtheræ libro idem mihi videri, quod olim Athanaſio, non eſſe canonicum) multum timoris habebant, veri mali nihil.*—"That it did not appear to him that the Jews had ever ſuffered from the Perſians any other evil than that of painful apprehenſion only; and that even of this we have no other evidence than what is grounded upon the book of Eſther, which has to him, as it had to Athanaſius formerly, an Apochryphal appearance." Michaelis de lxx. Hebdom. p. 124.

kingdom,

kingdom, which is mentioned in the ſecond and ſeventh chapters, upon almoſt any ſyſtem. For, according to Mr. Mede, it intends the kingdom of Chriſt, or Meſſiah; which does not however very well agree to the interpretation of the *four* preceding kingdoms given above, and which ſeemed at the time ſufficiently convincing: and it is accordingly explained by Grotius differently, and very conſiſtently, ſo far as this alone goes, of the Roman kingdom or empire; which he ſuppoſes to be repreſented in the ſeventh chapter by a *man*, rather than a beaſt, as the former four were, to ſignify its ſuperior civilization and mildneſs, to the Jews more eſpecially, in thoſe times, (for which ſee in illuſtration, 1 Mac. viii. xii. &c.) and by a *ſon of man*, or ordinary and common man, as that phraſe ſeems always to mean, with a view to its republican and not yet monarchal form; and to be truly ſaid to have been *given to the ſaints of the Moſt High*, when the empire became Chriſtian under Conſtantine; and to be not improperly ſpoken of as *a kingdom which ſhould never be deſtroyed*, in reſpect of its continuance in what is ſtill called the Roman empire in the Weſt; or, as ſome others perhaps may rather chooſe to explain this, in having been, by its civil laws and conſtitutions, &c. though now itſelf broken to pieces, the baſis, as it were, of almoſt all the preſent great Chriſtian States. So Grotius, whilſt Porphyry, on the other hand, as we ſeem to collect from Jerome, choſe to underſtand by *the ſon of man* in the ſeventh chapter, and the *ſtone cut out*

out of the mountain without hands in the ſecond *, the unexpected riſe and victories of Judas Maccabæus to be intended, and to have referred all the reſt to the overweening pride and nationality of the preſuming Jewiſh author; who, being now no longer under the guidance of known facts, might fondly imagine what more he pleaſed, and did in fact do ſo.—Concerning which different interpretations I would willingly, if I may be ſo far favoured, leave the adjudication to the reader; being rather willing for the preſent to deliberate with Bentley, than dogmatize in the preſent inſtance with either Porphyry, Mede, or Grotius.

Of the only remaining part of theſe prophecies, that of the ſeventy weeks in the ninth chapter, it may not now perhaps be neceſſary to diſcourſe largely. That it refers, like all the other, to the perſecution by Epiphanes may be reckoned probable: for who that has obſerved how they are all only ſo many different developements of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in the ſecond chapter, can very eaſily admit that this may poſſibly have ſome other tendency and meaning? It would require, I muſt confeſs, no common de-

* "The mountain is Moriah," ſays a modern writer, "where Jehovah's dwelling ſtood. The ſtone cut from it "without hands, which ſmote the feet of the image, and "brake it in pieces, and afterwards became a mountain, and "filled all the earth, ſignifies the power of Jehovah inviſibly "exerted in deſtroying the fourth kingdom of Syria and Egypt. "This being effected,——a Jewiſh kingdom was to be erected "——its dominion to be extended——and Jehovah's power to "be acknowledged by the nations, &c." Eſſays, as before, p. 53.

gree

gree of evidence before I could be willing to yield to a ſuppoſition ſo very extraordinary. Neither is this all. For, ſecondly, who does not alſo obſerve, in a curſory reading only of the whole of this famous and much litigated prophecy, how the ſame kind of general ideas, things, images, and perſons, as we have had hitherto, are ſtill before us? *The people of the prince*, for inſtance, in ver. 26th, *that ſhould come*, who ſhould they be, or are they ſo likely to be, as the army of Epiphanes? And, to make this the clearer, what do they do, when come, in that ſame verſe and the 27th, but the very ſame things which we have before ſeen to be done by him in the eleventh and twelfth chapters? And have we not alſo ſeen, in the obſervations upon thoſe chapters, ſomething of that cleanſing, purification, and anointing of the *moſt holy* place by Judas Maccabæus, which the 24th verſe ſo obviouſly refers to? Neither, thirdly, are the very obſervable and diſtinct periods or portions of *ſeven* weeks, *ſixty and two* weeks, and *one* week, into which the whole ſeventy weeks is divided, and for each of which diviſions a proper end or object is aſſigned, (a circumſtance which ſeems to indicate that the text is probably ſo far incorrupt) ſo unconformable to events happening about theſe ſeveral times, as not to render this another very probable argument. And, more eſpecially, when is added, in the fourth place, the conſideration of the unſatisfactory nature of all ſuch otherinterpretations of theſe ſeventy weeks as would apply them to Jeſus Chriſt; as may be collected from the number and diverſity of them, and, which is a proof

of the unſatisfactory nature of them hitherto, the new labours in this way which are ſtill from time time undertaken. To which perhaps this alſo may be ſubjoined, as being a matter of ſome little unlikelihood, that when the prophet was ſo ſeriouſly thinking and praying concerning one ſubject, in ver. 2, 3, the anſwer ſent to him ſhould be ſo wholly irrelative to it, and ſo much above it, and beyond it, as what the expoſition, uſually aimed at, ſuppoſes. —I ſhall therefore ſuppoſe for the preſent, and till ſome other and more pertinent and ſatisfactory view of this ſubject ſhall diſcloſe itſelf, that the interpretation of this propheſy, firſt ſuggeſted, amongſt the moderns at leaſt, by Sir John Marſham*, the chronologiſt, and ſince him adopted and improved upon by Harduin, Calmet, and ſome others, may poſſibly be the true one; of which the moſt material particulars, as ſuggeſted by one or other of them, are theſe following.—That *from the going forth of the commandment* or word to Jeremiah, concerning the reſtoration and building again of Jeruſalem, (for

* *Prophetica pars libri Danielis, ſive poſteriora vi. capita, quatuor illius viſiones continent; quibus res quidem una eademque, ſed diverſis modis, indicantur.—Primam, ſecundam, et quartam viſionem de Antiochi Epiphanis temporibus intelligunt fore omnes qui, poſt Joſephum* [Antiq. l. xii. ch. 11.] *de ea re ſcripſerunt. Illæ hiſtoriam futuram prenunciant; Tertia Viſio etiam Chronologiam exhibet.*—Chronicus Canon, p. 568. Londini.

"Of the four viſions in the ſix laſt chapters of Daniel, the "firſt, ſecond, and fourth, are a ſort of prophetic hiſtory, "of which the third may be reckoned the chronology: Ex"plained, by Joſephus, of Antiochus Epiphanes, and, ſince him, "by others almoſt univerſally."

which

which ſee Jer. xxv. 1, 12. xxix. 10, compared with Daniel ix. 2.) *unto the meſſiah the prince*, meaning Cyrus, at the time of his appearing publickly, as the leader of the Median and Perſian armies, and who is expreſsly ſo called in Iſ. xlv. 1ſt. *would be ſeven weeks*, that is of years *, or ſeven times ſeven years; which in fact it was, according to Prideaux, Uſher, and other chronologiſts, as may be ſeen by the chronological notes extracted from them hereafter.—That if from the ſame time or period † we again

* That the Jews had weeks of years as well as of days, each having its own proper reaſon and baſis, is as well known as any other part of their hiſtory; ſo untrue is the obſervation which ſome have made, that we have here an inſtance of day being put in the prophetic ſtyle for year; which it certainly is not, there being no ſubſtitution in the caſe of one for the other whatſoever. "The ſeventy weeks," ſays Prideaux, "are "weeks of years. For, among the Jews, as there were ſabba- "tical days, whereby their days were divided into weeks of "days, ſo there were (Lev. xxv. 1.) ſabbatical years, whereby "their years were divided into weeks of years." Connection under year 458.—And to like purpoſe Sir Iſaac Newton, in the Obſervations before quoted; "Daniel reckons by weeks of "years, which is a way of reckoning peculiar to the Jewiſh "years. For as their days ran by ſevens, and the laſt day of "every ſeven was a ſabbath, ſo their years ran by ſevens, and "the laſt year of every ſeven was a ſabbatical year, and ſeven "ſuch weeks of years made a jubilee." Ib. 138.

† So the learned Harduin, who ſuppoſes ſome reference to this peculiar mode of computation, and indication of it, in the original Hebrew word, tranſlated by the Latin vulgate, with which the Septuagiſt alſo agrees, *abbreviatæ ſunt*, "Seventy weeks are ſhortened or contracted;" referring us to Job xvii. 1. Prov. x. 27. Matt. xxiv. 22. Rom. ix. 28. in further illuſtraion.

again reckon *ſixty and two weeks*, or four hundred and thirty and four years, it will bring us to much about the time when another *meſſiah*, or anointed perſon; mentioned in ver. 26th, but not there called, as he could not be, in the ſame ſecular ſenſe, the prince; (which is obſervable) *was cut off*; meaning, as this ſcheme of interpretation ſuppoſes, Onias, the high prieſt, to whoſe murder, about this time, we have already had, in chap. viii. 11th, a reference; for which ſee alſo the ſame chronological extracts.—And how in the *one* week following, as we are naturally led to ſuppoſe the meaning to be, Epiphanes may be ſaid to have *confirmed the covenant*, or made an agreement or covenant, *with many*, that is, with the apoſtate Jews referred to in chap. xi. 30th, 32d*;

He alſo argues from this particular mode of expreſſion, "from the going forth—ſhall be ſeven weeks and ſixty and "two weeks;" as if each, however ending, was to ſpring or begin from the ſame point or period. Harduini Opera, p. 593, &c.

* It is obſervable, that reckoning backward ſeven years, from the cleanſing and dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabæus, brings us to the midſt and very worſt part of thoſe intrigues between Epiphanes and the apoſtate Jews to which the above paſſages refer, as well as brings the *one* week and *ſixty-two* weeks together; which makes me queſtion whether this be not the meaning? Others, however, explain otherwiſe: Sir John Marſham, of the ſeven years of tolerable peace, which he ſuppoſes the Jews to have enjoyed, from the beginning of the reign of Epiphanes, to his ſending of Apollonius with an armed force againſt Jeruſalem; and Harduin, of ſuch firmneſs in ſome of the religious Jews to their principles, much about this time, as chap. xi. 32, 33, 34, refers to; as if the meaning were, *And it*, i. e. this laſt week, *ſhall confirm the covenant with many*, or increaſe their attachment to it. And ſo alſo Mr. Wintle tranſlates; whoſe idea of the covenant is however different.

(for

(for the epithet *holy* is not added) and did in the *midſt*, or during the laſt half of it, that is, during three years and a half exactly, *cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe*, as in ver. 26th, is ſuppoſed to be ſo illuſtrated and confirmed by what we have ſeen in Joſephus and the firſt book of the Maccabees, as to give to this whole ſcheme of interpretation, and to what might hitherto have ſeemed but dubious, a ſort of decided claim to preference. And of the like ſort alſo is ſuppoſed to be, in no ſmall degree, what we further read in ver. 27th, of *the abomination that maketh deſolate*, intending no doubt that ſtatue of Jupiter Olympius in the holy place, which muſt have been an abominable ſight in the eye of every religious Jew, and ſufficient to make him flee from the place with abhorrence; to which alſo we have had a reference in chap. xi. 31ſt;—and again, what we further read of the *conſummation*, or finiſhing, in this ſame verſe, to be compared with the like idea in the ſame eleventh chapter, ver. 35, 36, 40th;—and once more, of ſomething to be at length *poured out upon the deſolator* himſelf, as the tranſlation would perhaps have better been; for which may be ſeen alſo chap. xi. *ult.* and ſuch accounts of the end of Epiphanes as are uſually there brought forwards.—So at leaſt theſe learned writers, with whom in the general ideas I certainly agree; leaving at the ſame time the more minute examination and adjuſtment of what may ſeem ſubordinate or objectionable, to ſuch, if ſuch

ſhall be, who may think the minuter parts of importance.*

* To ſome the following notes of time, taken chiefly from Prideaux, may not poſſibly be unacceptable.

Before Chriſt.

In the year of the world, 3395, and before Chriſt, 609, Jehoiakim, king of Judah, began to reign 609

Nebuchadnezzar takes Jeruſalem. The captivity begins. The word or commandment concerning the return comes to Jeremiah - - - - - - 606

Cyrus, ſon of Cambyſes, king of Perſia, born - 599

Great preparations made by the Medes and Babylonians for war - - - - - 558

The completion of the ſeven weeks, or forty-nine years (this beginning the fiftieth) may not, perhaps, improperly be placed here - - - - 557

Cyrus, being General of the Medes and Perſians, under Cyaxares his uncle, ſlays Nerigliſſar, king of Babylon, in battle - - - - - 556

——— takes Babylon and ſlays Belſhazzar - 539

——— places his uncle on the throne of Babylon 538

Who dies at Babylon, and Cyrus ſucceeds in the whole Empire - - - - - 537

——— reſtores the Jews, and puts an end to their captivity after 70 years - - - - 536

Xerxes reſolves on a war with the Greeks, and makes great preparations - - - - - 483

Alexander the Great, ſon of Philip, king of Macedonia, born - - - - - - 356

——— is appointed General of the Græcians againſt the Perſians - - - - - - 335

——— wins the battle of Granicus - - 334

——— defeats the Perſians in the plains of Arbela, and overthrows their whole Empire - - - 331

——— dies at Babylon. Aridæus his brother made nominal king, and the commanders of the army divide the provinces of the empire among themſelves - 323

Seleucus

Seleucus ſeizes Babylon. Whence begins that æra of the Greeks, or of Seleucus, or of the Seleucidæ, mentioned in 1. Mac. i. 10. - - - - - 312

Seleucus, Ptolomy, Caſſander, and Lyſimachus now make a formal diviſion of the dominions of Alexander, and become kings - - - - - 301

Antiochus Epiphanes begins to reign. Jaſon buys the high prieſthood of him, and ſupplants Onias his brother 175

Menelaus, another brother of Onias, ſupplants Jaſon, and buys of Antiochus the high prieſthood. Whereon Jaſon flies. The ſixty and two weeks now finiſhing - 172

Onias is put to death - - - - 171

Antiochus making his fourth and laſt expedition into Egypt, is forced by the Romans to return. In his rage and fury ſends Apollonius to Jeruſalem. Mattathias and his ſons take arms againſt him - - - 168

Mattathias being dead, Judas is made captain of the Jews in his father's ſtead. Antiochus goes into the Eaſt, the tidings from thence troubling him - - 166

Judas Maccabæus recovers Jeruſalem; reſtores the worſhip; inſtitutes the feaſt of the dedication - - 165

Antiochus Epiphanes being dead in the Eaſt, is ſucceeded, &c. - - - - - - 164

CHAPTER XI.

On the Revelation.

THE connection of this book with the Prophecies of Daniel will not probably be denied by any, and has been often acknowledged by many perſons *. I ſhall therefore not omit the preſent opportunity of making ſome few remarks upon it, which may aſſiſt us perhaps in judging of its Divine authority,

* In Mr. Mede's Works, p. 411, the fancied *effigies* of Daniel and St. John, as a ſort of ſynonimous and kindred authors, are placed ſide by ſide, in ſuch a manner, as may poſſibly have excited ſomething like religious emotion in the minds of ſome, and can ſcarcely have failed to amuſe others.——In the title page of Sir Iſaac Newton's Work, more than once mentioned before, they are alſo as ſuch joined together, though the pictures of them are not given; who ſays, at his entrance upon the latter of them, in p. 234, " the Apocalypſe of John is written " in the ſame ſtyle and language with the Prophecies of Daniel, " and hath the ſame relation to them which they have to " one another, ſo that all of them taken together, make but " one complete prophecy."——*Vix Reperias*, ſays Biſhop Andrews, as quoted by Biſhop Hurd, in the Sermons formerly mentioned, *apud Johannem phraſim aliquam, niſi vel ex Daniele, vel ex alio aliquo propheta deſumptam.* " There is ſcarcely a " phraſe in the Revelation which is not to be found in ſome or " other of the prophets, in the prophecies of Daniel more " eſpecially."——And in the Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors by Mr. Walpole, in vol. ii. p. 230, the following expreſſive title of a book there mentioned is obſervable, " *Synopſis Apocalyptica*, or a ſhort and plain explication and " application of Daniel's Prophecy and St. John's Revelation " in conſent with it, and conſequential to it."——It would be eaſy to find, I imagine, more inſtances.

or

or the contrary, and in the determination of this other queſtion, How far it may be prudent or otherwiſe to lay out any large portion of our time in the ſtudy of it, and its explication? This being the whole of my deſign, the reader will expect only a brief analyſis or ſurvey, not a commentary. And upon this account I ſhall paſs over the firſt three chapters, which are uſually reckoned not more difficult than the other parts of the New Teſtament, and begin only where the peculiarity of the book is ſuppoſed to begin, in the fourth chapter.

Chap. iv. 1ſt. *After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened into heaven: and the firſt voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which ſaid, Come up hither, and I will ſhew thee the things which muſt be hereafter.* The writer then goes on to tell how he ſaw in heaven one ſitting upon a throne, with four and twenty elders ſitting upon ſubordinate thrones or ſeats about him; and more inward ſtill, as it ſhould ſeem, and nearer than they were, four beaſts, as the text calls them; or as ſome chooſe to tranſlate, for the ſake of greater decorum, as they think it, living creatures. ——*And I ſaw,* chap. v. 1ſt, *in the right hand of him that ſat on the throne, a book,* that is, roll or volume, *written within, and on the backſide, ſealed with ſeven ſeals. And I ſaw a ſtrong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to looſe the ſeals thereof?*—In the following verſes we are told, how, in all heaven, the Lamb only, which had been ſlain, and which was in the midſt of the throne, that is, more inward ſtill,

ſtill, and nearer to it than the elders and living creatures before mentioned, (for the diſpoſition and arrangement is plainly ſuppoſed to be ſemi-circular, much like thoſe in Dan. vii. 9.) was found worthy to do ſo.—Upon which there follow ſuch aſcriptions of praiſe and honour to Him that ſat upon the throne and the Lamb, as may be ſeen, with the reaſons of them, in the 8th verſe and following. After which the grand ſcheme and diſplay of theſe prophecies thus opens:

Chap. vi. 1ſt. *And I ſaw when the Lamb opened one*, or the firſt, *of the ſeals, and I heard, as it were the voice of thunder, one of the four beaſts, ſaying, Come, and ſee; And I ſaw, and behold, a white horſe; and he that ſat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.* As all firſt ideas are uſually of importance, their influence upon what follows being generally not ſmall, it would ſeem to be very deſirable to determine, if we could, whom we are to underſtand by this conquering perſon. And to me it ſeems inconceivable how any perſon, coming to the reading of this book with ſimplicity of mind, and yet uninfluenced by any pre-diſpoſing ſyſtem, ſhould be able to think in the firſt inſtance of any other perſon than Jeſus Chriſt, and of the victorious progreſs of his Goſpel. Others, however, and Bp. Newton in particular, who, being one of the laſt, may be ſuppoſed, upon this account, as well as for ſome other reaſons, to be not the leaſt of the commentators on this book, rather chooſe to explain the paſſage of Veſpaſian, who was General of the

Roman army in the Jewiſh war, and was thence called away to be Emperor, leaving the future conduct of it to his ſon Titus. Let us, therefore, for the preſent, ſuppoſe this point to be doubtful; and, only bearing it in mind, obſerve how far any thing which ſhall ariſe hereafter may have any tendency to fix it; theſe remarks however being in the mean time previouſly made, viz. that Jeſus being the perſon firſt and moſt obviouſly to be thought of, (for what has yet been before us to ſuggeſt any other notion?) it would ſeem to require a proportionably greater evidence before the claim of any other perſon can be admitted;—and, ſecondly, that it will be only when we can be ſure of this firſt point, or ſome other of the like kind, and equivalent to it, that we can be certain that we are not floating in conjecture, but have ſomething like a principle to proceed upon.---And for theſe reaſons I ſhall not only diſmiſs for the preſent all further remarks upon the opening of this *firſt* ſeal, but paſs over alſo what is ſaid in the ſubſequent verſes of the like opening of the *ſecond*, *third*, *fourth*, *fifth*, and *ſixth* ſeals, as containing nothing of this luminous and determinate ſort; unleſs perchance what was ſeen at the opening of the fifth ſeal, in ver. 9th, and which evidently refers to the martyrdom of ſome of the firſt Chriſtians, ſhould be thought worthy of ſome notice in this view; and again, the language made uſe of in deſcribing the events which followed upon the opening of the ſixth ſeal, and which is ſo much like that uſed by our Saviour in St. Matthew, chap. xxiv. in his repreſentation of the

the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, that "it would," in the opinion of no mean critic and judge in the language of Scripture, "be more honourable and rational to give up the Divine Authority of the whole book than to attempt to explain the appearances mentioned under it upon any other principle *." Here then we have, according to this author, and for the firſt time perhaps, one fixt principle at leaſt, and ſure rule to go by, in our endeavour to diſcover ſomething concerning the deſign and leading ideas of this book. To this then, if perchance the things which follow ſhall be in conſiſtence with it, and tend to its confirmation; as well as to the caſe of him that went forth to conquer, and which, if it means Veſpaſian, does very well ſuit with this; let us be attentive.

Of the Seventh Chapter, which may be conſidered as a ſort of Epiſode between the opening of the ſixth and ſeventh ſeals, nothing, in ſuch a general ſurvey of the whole as we are now taking, need be ſpoken; ſave only, that what we read in the 9th and following verſes is in no ſmall degree evangelical, inſtructive, and edifying. The *ſeventh* and laſt ſeal does then open.

Chap. viii. 1ſt. *And when he had opened the ſeventh ſeal, there was ſilence in heaven about the ſpace of half an hour. And I ſaw the ſeven angels which ſtood before God, and to them were given ſeven trumpets.*——Ver. 6th. *And the ſeven angels,*

* Introductory Lectures to the Study of the New Teſtament, by Mr. Michaelis.

which

which had the ſeven trumpets, prepared themſelves to ſound. And the firſt angel ſounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were caſt upon the earth, and the third part of the trees was burnt up. The ſeventh ſeal then is only obſervable in its opening as it is the introducement of the ſeven trumpets, the ſoundings of which (and we have here the firſt of them) may be ſaid to make up the ſecond main part of this myſterious book *. In the 9th verſe the *ſecond* angel or trumpet ſounds; in the 10th verſe the *third*; in the 12th verſe the *fourth*; and each of them with attending circumſtances equally myſterious; and all of them to ſuch a degree ſo, as may be ſuppoſed to be to all, who are only for the firſt time making their remarks, quite unintelligible.—Ver. 13th. *And I beheld, and heard an angel, flying through the midſt of heaven, ſaying, with a loud voice, Woe, Woe, Woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reaſon of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to ſound.* This is evidently meant to prepare us for the ſoundings of theſe three laſt more eſpecially, and leads us to expect ſomething extraordinary under each. Let us therefore be obſervant.

Chap. ix. 1ſt. *And the fifth angel ſounded, and I ſaw a ſtar fall from heaven upon the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomleſs pit. And*

* How almoſt every thing in this book proceeds by ſevens is not a little curious to be obſerved. Seven ſeals,—ſeven trumpets,—and afterwards ſeven vials. Beſides ſome other ſevens of a more ſubordinate kind perhaps, as churches, angels, candleſticks, &c.

he

he opened the bottomleſs pit, and there aroſe a ſmoke out of the pit, as the ſmoke of a great furnace; and the ſun and the air were darkened, by reaſon of the ſmoke of the pit. And there came out of the ſmoke locuſts upon the earth, and unto them was given power, as the ſcorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them, that they ſhould not hurt the graſs of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only thoſe men which have not the ſeal of God (an evident reference to chap. vii. 2, 3,) *in their foreheads.— And the ſhape of the locuſts was like unto horſes prepared unto the battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns of gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breaſt-plates, as it were breaſt-plates of iron, and the ſound of their wings was as the ſound of chariots, of many horſes running to battle. And they had tails like unto ſcorpions, and there were ſtings in their tails, and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomleſs pit, whoſe name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One woe,* of the three particularly great ones before mentioned, in chap. viii. ult. *is paſt, and behold, there come two woes more hereafter.* I have tranſcribed nearly the whole account of the ſounding of this *fifth* angel's trumpet, that the reader may ſee by this one the general nature of the others, all of them being much in the

ſame

ſame manner. And I muſt ſay, it has often appeared to me ſtrange, that pious, judicious, and learned perſons can ſo eaſily admit, as they ſeem in general to have done, that the Spirit of God and of truth ſhould be likely to ſpeak in language and under images ſo ſingularly ſtrange, and ſo far removed from nature and ſimplicity as all this ſeems to be. And yet I dare not ſay, that ſuch is not the caſe; nor yet again, whether ſome others may not ſay, that this other ſuppoſition, that the mind of man without ſome extraordinary impulſe or direction ſhould have ſported itſelf as it were in this way, and fallen upon ſuch ideas, working by itſelf alone, is not full as inadmiſſible. So leaving theſe obſervations, once made, to be applied and diſpoſed of hereafter as the reader ſhall ſee to be proper, I paſs over the ſounding of the next or *ſixth* angel's trumpet, of which an account is given in the 13th and following verſes to the end, and ſhould go on to the *ſeventh*, which ſomewhat differs in general character from the reſt; were it not that between the ſounding of this ſixth and the ſeventh (ſomewhat after the manner of what has before been the caſe between the opening of the ſixth and ſeventh ſeals) ſomething of the epiſodical kind is alſo thrown in, and of ſuch a ſort as muſt not be paſſed over, in ſuch a general ſurvey as we are now taking.

Chap. x. 1ſt. *And I ſaw another mighty angel* (another beſide the four who made their appearance when the ſixth angel ſounded, in chap. ix. 14, 15,) *come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was*

as

as it were the ſun, and his feet as pillars of fire. And he had in his hand a little book open: and he ſet his right foot upon the ſea, and his left foot on the earth.—Ver. 5th. *And the angel which I ſaw ſtand upon the ſea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, And ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the ſea and the things which are therein, that the time ſhall not be longer: But that in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, when he ſhall begin to ſound, the myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed*, &c. Here how the principal parts of the above deſcription of the angel and of his attitude are copied from Daniel, chap. xii. 5, 6, 7, is worth obſerving, as is alſo another alluſion to the ſame prophet in the following chapter, which is ſtill more pointed and emphatical; chap. xi. 1ſt and following, *And there was given to me a reed, like unto a rod, and the angel* (the ſame angel, we may ſuppoſe, as in the preceding chapter) *ſtood, ſaying, Riſe, and meaſure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worſhip therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city ſhall they tread under foot forty and two months*, or three years and a half, the time, times, and dividing of time, mentioned in Daniel more than once ſo emphatically. Ver. 3d. *And I will give power unto my two witneſſes, and they ſhall prophecy a thouſand, two hundred, and threeſcore days clothed in ſackcloth*;—the ſame emphatical period of time as before,

before, only expreſſed differently. Ver. 7th. *And when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony, the beaſt that aſcendeth out of the bottomleſs pit* (probably meaning him who was before mentioned in chap. ix. 11.) *ſhall make war againſt them, and ſhall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies ſhall lie in the ſtreet of the great city, which ſpiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified.* Whether by the temple here mentioned is not figuratively repreſented the Chriſtian church, conſiſting of true Jews or believers; and by the Gentiles, who ſhould tread down its outer courts, perſecutors or enemies, who were not in this ſenſe true Jews, but rather Gentiles*; it may perhaps be very expedient in thoſe by whom a minute and accurate interpretation may be intended, to conſider: as alſo, whether, by the two witneſſes, the two different denominations of Jewiſh and Gentile Chriſtians, and the confeſſors amongſt them more particularly, may not be referred to? But of this, I preſume, we may be almoſt certain, that we have here, in what is ſaid of the great city, ſpiritually called Sodom, &c. a very palpable denotation of the city Jeruſalem, as now being, or as having once been, the metropolis or ſeat of the unbelieving and perſecuting Jews; and that therefore the writer muſt have meant in this paſſage to inſinuate or ſay ſomething concerning theſe perſons: inaſmuch as to explain the phraſe, "where "our Lord was crucified," of modern Rome,

* As before in chap. ii. 9. Gal. vi. 16.

where Chriſt, it is ſaid, has been ſo often crucified in his members, meaning Proteſtant ſufferers, beſides the puerility and quaintneſs of the idea, is, in my opinion, neglecting to avail ourſelves of one of the moſt determinate and inſtructive hints, tending to the opening of the author's deſign, which has yet been before us; as will perhaps be the more readily granted, if it ſhall hereafter appear, that the city of Rome has its own appropriate denotation; and that a very different one from either Sodom or Egypt; in theſe prophecies.—Ver. 11th. *And after three days and a half*, (an idea which ſeems to be copied from the three years and a half ſo often mentioned) *the Spirit of Life from God entered into them, and they ſtood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which ſaw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, ſaying unto them, Come up hither. And they aſcended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them. And the ſame hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were ſlain of men ſeven thouſand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*—Ver. 14th. *The ſecond woe is paſt*, is now paſſed, *Behold, the third woe cometh quickly*, or immediately. Ver. 15th. *And the ſeventh angel ſounded*, (which is ſimultaneous, or the ſame thing with it; ſee before, chap. viii. ult.) *and there were great voices in heaven, ſaying, The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt, and he ſhall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which ſat before God*

on

on their ſeats, (which imagery both here and in chap. iv. 6. ſeems to be taken from Dan. vii.) *fell upon their faces, and worſhipped God, ſaying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and waſt, and art to come; becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they ſhould be judged, and that thou ſhouldeſt give the reward unto thy ſervants the prophets, and to the ſaints, and them that fear thy name, ſmall ana great, and ſhouldeſt deſtroy them that deſtroy the earth.* Such was the event of the *ſeventh* angel's ſounding, and ſo finiſhes with it the *third* of the great woes, as it is above called; but with little propriety, as it ſhould ſeem, unleſs in a partial ſenſe only; praiſes and thankſgivings being rather what the grand fact, mentioned in ver. 15th, calls for, and which the four and twenty elders are repreſented, and ſeemingly with good reaſon, as offering.—The next and laſt words, *And the temple of God*, &c. ſo obviouſly belong, as Grotius and others have obſerved, to the ſubject of the next chapter, that I ſhall aſſume them as a part of it without ceremony.

Chap. xi. ult. chap. xii. 1ſt, and following; *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was ſeen in his temple the ark of his teſtament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the ſun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve ſtars: And*

ſhe being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having ſeven heads, and ten horns, and ſeven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the ſtars of heaven, and did caſt them to the earth. And the dragon ſtood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as ſoon as it was born. And ſhe brought forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderneſs, where ſhe had a place prepared of God, that they ſhould feed her there a thouſand, two hundred, and threeſcore days, the period of time, the reader will obſerve, ſo often before mentioned.—Upon this, it ſeems, *there was war in heaven,* as the 7th verſe informs us; *Michael,* who is one of Daniel's princes, or preſiding angels, *and his angels fought againſt the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels; and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.* —Ver. 13th. *And when the dragon ſaw that he was caſt unto the earth, he perſecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given the wings of a great eagle, that ſhe might fly into the wilderneſs into her place: where ſhe is nouriſhed for a time, times, and half a time.* That this woman was meant to repreſent the church will not probably be queſtioned. How far what is ſaid of the man-child may be a deſigned repreſentation of the vigour and firmneſs of the firſt Chriſtians in general,

general, or of Conſtantine the firſt Chriſtian emperor in particular, (for inſtances of either interpretation may be met with) I leave thoſe to conſider whom it more eſpecially concerns. That the name Michael is probably taken from Daniel, and that the periods of time mentioned are, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, tranſcripts from that prophet, cannot poſſibly eſcape the notice of any reader.

Chap. xiii. 1ſt. *And I ſtood upon the ſand of the ſea, and ſaw a beaſt riſe up out of the ſea,* (the like imagery we have had before in Daniel, chap. vii.) *having ſeven heads, and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns,* (the ſame has been before ſaid of the dragon in the former chapter; who is here repreſented, in ver. 4th, as giving to this beaſt what aſſiſtance he is able,) *and upon his heads the name of blaſphemy.*—Ver. 5th. *And there was given unto him a mouth ſpeaking great things, and blaſphemies; and power was given unto him to continue* (this the reader will obſerve) *forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blaſphemy againſt God, to blaſpheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the ſaints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.* This is almoſt a literal tranſcript of ſome of the moſt peculiar things which we have before ſeen to be ſpoken in Daniel, chap. viith, concerning Epiphanes; ſo that the writer muſt be either ſuppoſed to have copied from thence, or elſe the ſame inſpiring ſpirit to have been the author of both paſſages equally.—

Ver. 11th. *And I beheld another beaſt coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he ſpake as a dragon. And he exerciſeth all the power of the firſt beaſt before him, and he cauſeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worſhip the firſt beaſt*, &c.—Ver. 18th. *Here is Wiſdom*; an opportunity of diſplaying it, whoever has it: *Let him that hath underſtanding count the number of the beaſt; for it is the number of a man;* agreeable to a method of expreſſing names by numbers which is ſometimes uſed among men *; *and his number is ſix hundred, threeſcore, and ſix.* This exact number being found, according to the numerical meaning of the letters, in the word *Romiſh*, when written Hebraically, and in the Greek word *Lateinos*, renders this paſſage, in ſuch a view of this book as we are now taking, of conſiderable importance; as it ſhews that the writer or inſpirer was now certainly thinking of the Roman city, power, or empire; as we have before ſeen him, by a like ſignificant and characteriſtic denotation, in chap. xith. 8th. to have been there, in a ſomewhat like manner, thinking of Jeruſalem, or the Jewiſh people. So that we ſeem to be now in poſſeſſion of at leaſt two points of certainty, above what we have had before, to guide us in our inquiry into the leading deſign and general ideas of this book; if perchance we may be able to diſcover them; and ſhall ſee ſtill further proof, it is apprehended, of one of them, in what

* To thoſe, though not learned, who ſhall obſerve how even amongſt ourſelves numbers are ſometimes expreſſed by letters, as 10, 50, 100, 1000, by X, L, C, M, &c. what is ſaid above need not ſeem wholly unintelligible.

is ſaid concerning Rome in the xviith chapter, where it is called myſtical Babylon, and is marked out, in ver. 9th and 18th, by ſuch a reference to the ſeven hills upon which that city is celebrated for having ſtood, as to render a miſtake in this inſtance almoſt impoſſible.—Of theſe other which intervene, chap. xiv. xv. xvi. the xivth contains nothing of importance to be obſerved, in that view of the book we are taking, unleſs the mention of Babylon once more in ver. 8th may be thought ſomething of this kind; and of the other chapters, the xvth and xvith, which contain the account of the ſeven angels, having the ſeven laſt plagues, in as many vials, which are poured out in the laſt, it will not, I conceive, be untrue to ſay of them, that, compared with thoſe which ſpake before of the ſeals and trumpets, they will be found perhaps not more but even leſs intelligible.—In the xviiith chapter the fall of this ſame myſtical Babylon is deſcribed in language which is taken in almoſt every part from the Old Teſtament prophecies or denunciations concerning the then literal Babylon, Tyre, or Egypt, as may be ſeen in the commentators; ſo little is there of novelty here, or what, as ſuch, need detain us.—After which the xixth chapter goes on to repreſent the great rejoicings of the heavenly inhabitants, and of the four and twenty elders and four living creatures more eſpecially, upon this occaſion; and ſome other victories of Chriſt over his bride's or church's enemies, in the manner following: Ver. 11th. *And I ſaw heaven opened, and behold a white horſe, and he that ſat upon him, was called*

faithful and true, and in righteouſneſs doth he judge and make war. That this is a deſigned repreſentation of Jeſus Chriſt muſt appear to every one reading the further deſcription of this ſame perſon in the verſes following, and will therefore probably fix, with ſome, what in the account of him that ſat upon the white horſe, in chap. vi. 2. was then ſuppoſed to be doubtful; and with a view to which only this part of the chapter needed to be mentioned. Ver. 17. *And I ſaw an angel ſtanding in the ſun, and he cried with a loud voice, ſaying to all the fowls that fly in the midſt of heaven, Come and gather yourſelves together unto the ſupper of the great God,* ſuch a great and rich one as he is preparing for you; *That ye may eat the fleſh of Kings, and the fleſh of Captains, and the fleſh of mighty men, and the fleſh of horſes, and of them that ſit on them, and the fleſh of all men, both free and bond, both ſmall and great. And I ſaw the beaſt,* mentioned in the xiiith chapter, *and the kings of the earth, who wandered after the beaſt,* ſee the ſame xiiith chapter, *and gave their power to him, and their armies, gathered together to make war againſt him that ſat on the horſe, and againſt his army. And the beaſt was taken, and with him the falſe prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhipped his image;* for which ſee again, chap. xiii. 11th, &c. *---Theſe both were caſt alive into the lake of fire burning with brimſtone. And the remnant were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe,*

which

which ſword proceeded out of his mouth; (ſee before, ver. 15th) *and all the fowls were filled with their fleſh.* There ſtill remained however that dragon or old ſerpent, called the Devil and Satan, which perſecuted the woman that brought forth the man-child, in chap. xiith; and we are now to obſerve how he, in the next chapter, is diſpoſed of. Chap. xx. 1ſt. *And I ſaw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomleſs pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon that old ſerpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thouſand years.* After which, and no doubt very much in conſequence of it, follows that reign of Chriſt upon earth for a *thouſand* years, thence called the *Millenium*, which is too famous a topic in theology to be wholly unknown to almoſt any reader; and concerning which I need only obſerve, as pertinent to the deſign of the preſent inquiry, that it ſeems to have been in the firſt conception, whatever may be thought of its more particular meaning, rather of Jewiſh and Rabbinical, than of Chriſtian original*; as may be alſo obſerved

* "The generality of the Jews, and many Chriſtians, both "ancient and modern, have looked upon the main deſign of "theſe inſtitutions [the ſabbath, the ſabbatic year, and the jubilee] "to be typical of the millenium, or thouſand years of "reſt; for as the Pentateuch conſecrates the ſeventh day, "the ſeventh year, and the ſeven times ſeventh year, to reſt, "they conclude, that the world will laſt ſix thouſand years in "its preſent ſtate; or, as R. Elias expreſſes it, two thouſand "years without the law, two thouſand under the law, "and two thouſand under the Meſſiah; after which comes "the

obſerved concerning that Gog and Magog led on by Satan againſt the camp of the ſaints and the beloved city, after the thouſand years ſhould be over, and the deſtruction of them by fire from God out of heaven, which is next mentioned; ſee Ezekiel xxxviiith and xxxixth in illuſtration.---Ver. 10th. *And the devil that deceived them*, meaning Gog and Magog, and the other nations in the four quarters of the earth, (Gog and Magog ſeeming to be here ſuppoſed to be the firſt and principal of them; ſee ver. 8th) *was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt and falſe prophet are, and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* Then follows, in the 11th and remaining verſes, an evident deſcription of the laſt judgment, as is not, I think, denied by any perſons; and in the two next and laſt chapters of this book, what ſeems to be an equally obvious and intentional repreſentation, in the ideas of this writer, of the

" the grand ſabbath of one thouſand years." Univerſal Hiſt. part 1. vol. ii.

" *And God made in ſix days the work of his hands, and he finiſhed* " *them on the ſeventh day, and he reſted in it, and ſanctified it.* " Conſider, children, what that ſignifies, *he finiſhed them in ſix* " *days.* This it ſignifies, that the Lord God will finiſh all " things in ſix thouſand years. For a day with him is a thou- " ſand years.—*And he reſted on the ſeventh day.* This ſignifies, " that when his Son ſhall come, and ſhall aboliſh the ſeaſon of " the wicked one, and ſhall judge the ungodly, he ſhall reſt " glorioufly in that ſeventh day." From the Epiſtle of St. Barnabas, the firſt of Chriſtian writers, as is generally ſuppoſed, after the Apoſtles. They who wiſh for more may conſult Mr. Mede's works, p. 892, and other authors.

future

future ſtate of felicity*; but how far intended by him to be literally or only figuratively taken, I preſume not to determine; nor yet again, ſuppoſing this to be known, how far we ſhould be determined by ſuch an authority.

That the author of this book was a Chriſtian, who felt ſomewhat ſtrongly for the ſufferings of the firſt Chriſtian martyrs and confeſſors, may have appeared, I ſuppoſe, from divers paſſages in it, which have been quoted or referred to: and alſo that he was a Jewiſh, and not a Gentile Chriſtian; the accuracy of his acquaintance with the Jewiſh ritual and worſhip, and not only acquaintance with, but even predilection for the Jewiſh prophecies, ſeeming to make this equally evident. From the nature alſo of his references to Daniel more eſpecially, and adoption of much the ſame imagery, and the very ſame notes of time, it cannot, I think, be queſtioned, whether he conceived of himſelf to be writing upon the ſame or very nearly the ſame ſubjects. The moſt material queſtion of all is, whether he did this by a truly ſupernatural and prophetic impulſe, or from the ſuggeſtion, impulſe, or inſpiration, as perhaps I may be allowed to call it, of private zeal, and a fervent and forcible imagination only? And this alſo would ſeem to be anſwered to a ſufficiently

* Others however have thought otherwiſe, more particularly Grotius and Hammond, who ſuppoſe the viſion which opens in chap. xxiſt, to be only a more explicit repreſentation of the ſafety and felicity of the *millenial* church in chap. xxth. and which they explain of the thouſand years from Conſtantine, the firſt Chriſtian emperor, to the taking of Conſtantinople by the Turks; which to ſome will ſeem rather wonderful.

practical

practical ſatisfaction, if it could be made appear, either that ſuch future events and perſons as the church affairs and biſhops of Rome, as ſome affirm, are foreſeen and referred to in it; or could be proved, that John, the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, was the author of it. But of either of theſe we have not, I conceive, ſufficient evidence. Not, in the firſt place, that John the Apoſtle was the writer of it; whoſe manner and ſtyle in thoſe indiſputable works of his, the Goſpel and Epiſtles, are ſo very different, that it may perhaps be queſtioned, whether the whole hiſtory of learning would afford, in caſe this were granted, an equal inſtance, in one and the ſame author, of the like kind of diſparity; a diſparity, as ſeems to me, to be of ſuch a kind, not as may be often ſeen, and is eaſily accounted for, by ſuppoſing the inequality of an author to himſelf, by ſometimes doing better and ſometime worſe; but of ſuch a ſort rather, as might lead one to conceive of two authors, each doing well in his own way, but in ſuch different ways, that the one never was nor could have been the other. Neither is the other point, of reference or foreſight in this book to ſuch ſubſequent things and perſons as the church and biſhops of Rome, &c. more evident. For why ſuppoſe or aſſume this, when the city of Rome did as much exiſt in the firſt, as in any of the after ages of the church? and to the city or empire then exiſting every thing in this book is applicable? To the mere word or name the enigmatical alluſion in chap, xiii. *ult.* was then as obvious as at any time afterwards: and ſo alſo is the reference to thoſe ſeven

hills

hills upon which the city ſtood; which are frequently mentioned by the ancient claſſical writers. And as to the idolatry with which ſhe is here charged, with the additioual aggravation of being the *mother of harlots* as it were, or the firſt and chief of idolatrous cities, and the patroneſs as it were of that ſort of worſhip in the world; who that ſhall obſerve how this phraſeology is taken from the Old Teſtament, and was firſt of all applied to the ancient Babylon*, can fail to ſee that it was equally true, and full as properly applied to the myſtical Babylon or Rome at that time exiſting? and with much leſs of illiberality, and want of candour, and more conformity to the ſcripture ſtyle, than a certain other interpretation can equally well pretend to?

I ſhall therefore conclude, for the preſent, with obſerving, that the writer of this book was certainly a Chriſtian, and alſo a zealous Jewiſh Chriſtian, who, feeling much for the ſufferings of his brethren, has accordingly characterized, and even ſtigmatized, the two great authors of their ſufferings, I mean the unbelieving Jews and idolatrous Romans, by ſuch expreſſive, and even bitter and ſarcaſtic denotations of their reſpective head cities or reſidences (very lately at leaſt, and probably even now) as have been before us. And ſhall only here add further, that if any one, aſſuming theſe, as two points of certainty†, ſhould,

* See more particularly in this view, Jer. li. 6, 7. Iſaiah xxiii. 15, 17.

† I am the more diſpoſed to ſpeak upon this head with confidence, in conſequence of another evidence of its truth which has been

ſhould, with the aid of any thing elſe which has yet been before us and ſeemed plauſible; as that perhaps concerning the conqueror in chap. vi. 2d, and again what is ſaid in the 12th and following verſes, when explained by Matt. xxivth,---be able, with ſuch data, to fill up the interſtices as it were or intervals between them; not by ſuppoſitions, and imaginations which have nothing fixed and determinate in them; but by the evidence of facts, and the aids of ſolid and ſubſtantial criticiſm, ſo as to preſent before the mind ſomething like a regular ſcheme or plan of juſt and well founded interpretation,---that to ſuch a one would belong the praiſe of having done more towards the explication of this book, and eſtabliſhment of its Divine authority, than has perhaps been yet done, or is ſoon like to be ſo. And yet, reſpecting the laſt of theſe two particulars, I know not whether I ſhould not expreſs myſelf ſomewhat differently; it having ſometimes occurred to my thoughts, whether the extreme difficulty of explaining this book, hitherto, upon any merely human, natural, and common principles, may not be conſidered by ſome, as a ſort of preſumptive proof or indication, that there muſt have been originally ſomething more than what is only human in it. This at leaſt is well known, that

been before us. We have ſeen the myſtical Babylon charged with ſpiritual fornication, and as being the mother of that kind of harlotry; but nothing of this is ſaid of the ſpiritual Sodom and Egypt in chap. xith. The reaſon is obvious. The unbelieving Jews, however vicious and malignant, were not idolaters.

certain

certain divines, of much gravity and learning, have not been unwilling, in the proof of ſome of their points, to avail themſelves of ſuch a ſort of argument *.

* *Calvinus ſapuit*, ſays Scaliger, as Whitby quotes him, *quia non ſcripſit in Apocalypſin*; "Calvin was wiſe, becauſe he did not write on the Revelations." Whom Whitby alſo approves, and follows, in this inſtance. It may be reckoned remarkable, that two ſuch men as Scaliger and Whitby ſhould ſo readily unite in this praiſe of Calvin; nor is it leſs ſo, that ſuch large numbers of this eminent reformer's diſciples ſhould have ſo clearly ſeen in the Revelations what he, with all his zeal and perſpicacity, was not able to diſcover.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XII.

A Brief Review, and ſome additional Remarks; on Iſaiah's Prophecies more eſpecially.

IN that ſurvey of the nature and deſign of the Chriſtan Doctrine, which was propoſed to be taken in a former chapter, it ſeemed proper to begin with what Jeſus himſelf is reported to have begun with, as St. Mark has given it, in chap. i. 14. *Now after that John was put in priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom of God, And ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the Goſpel.* In which words, "the time is fulfilled," &c. there is uſually ſuppoſed to be ſuch a reference to certain prophecies in the Old Teſtament, concerning the time and nature of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, anciently foreſeen and predicted in them, as could not be then more particularly inquired into and illuſtrated, and yet ſhould not, I think, be wholly paſſed over. And the leſs ſo, as the ſame remark may be applied to two other paſſages which were in the ſame chapter deſcanted upon; to wit, Luke xxiv. 45, 46; Acts x. 43; in which a ſtill more expreſs mention is made of the ancient prophecies; but of which no more notice was at that time taken. I ſhall therefore now, as one who would willingly deal faithfully with his readers, ſay ſomething upon theſe references: it being my deſire,

ſire, in theſe my perigrinations through the books of Scripture, if I may be allowed to expreſs myſelf in this manner, to report as I find, and to leave nothing which may ſeem to want illuſtration unattempted, how much ſoever I may fail in the attempt through unavoidable ignorance or incapacity.

Of the Chriſtian religion, as founded upon facts, that primary fact more eſpecially, the Reſurrection of Chriſt, to which the converſion of St. Paul, as only ſecond in importance, may be added; the evidence will not, perhaps, be ſaid, by unbelievers themſelves, to be inconſiderable; neither have the objections, probably, of ſuch as have either doubted, or more deliberately diſbelieved, ſuggeſted themſelves, for the firſt time, in the ſtudy of this argument. But it may be affirmed, I ſuppoſe, with much appearance of truth, that of thoſe who have been ſhaken in mind by the obſervation, as has ſeemed to them, of the almoſt total failure, or, as perhaps, ſome may have ſaid, even literally total failure, of the argument drawn from prophecy, and application, either rightly or wrongly, of paſſages of the Old Teſtament to things or perſons in the New, the number has not been, and ſtill is not, inconſiderable. Neither has the difficulty, I apprehend, been diminiſhed, but rather perhaps augmented in the minds of many, by the obſervation of thoſe ſeveral expedients of divers learned, ingenious, and zealous men to remove it; by the ſuppoſal of double ſenſes, popular accommodations only, or of invidious and intentional corruptions of the original Hebrew text by the Jews, &c; which, however diſ-

poſed of and ſettled at laſt, ſeem leſs proper to begin with, in the caſe of unbelievers, and not very likely to produce conviction in the firſt inſtance.

Under theſe circumſtances I have been wont to ſay to myſelf, and would willingly be aſſiſting to others, who may poſſibly at preſent have the ſame view of the ſubject, by ſuggeſting to them, the things following:

Firſt, that the argument in favour of the Chriſtian religion and doctrine, drawn from the reſurrection of Jeſus; the firm perſuaſion which his Apoſtles and firſt miniſters appear to have had of it, and the effects of a laborious and ſelf-denying kind, which this conviction ſeems to have been attended with, and to have wrought both upon themſelves and thoſe that heard them; is, as has been above obſerved, an argument from fact, and of the more ſenſible and viſible kind as it were; and may therefore ſeem to be in its own nature more deciſive, and better ſuited to the determination of a queſtion upon which the moſt important intereſts of mankind depend, than this other, making againſt it, as ſome may think, drawn from the ſeeming failure of ancient prophecies, or the miſapplication, as ſome may imagine, of certain paſſages of the Old Teſtament; by how much matters of fact do generally admit of more eaſy proof, and do uſually lie in a narrower compaſs, than matters of criticiſm; which are not unfrequently of a more complex kind, and depending, perhaps, for their proof, upon leſs obvious and ſenſible threads of argument:

But

But that nevertheleſs, ſecondly, it cannot upon any principles be ſaid with ſafety, that the objection in queſtion, ſo long as it remains unremoved, or is not anſwered to ſome tolerable ſatisfaction, is not of any weight at all, or will not juſtify a correſpondent degree of heſitation, ſuſpence, or doubting for a time, (the very frequent appeals made by Jeſus and his Apoſtles to the Old Teſtament conſidered) however the principle of faith may be ſtill, as perhaps it ought to be, predominant.

And that therefore, thirdly, (ſuſpence, doubt, or heſitation not being a ſtate of mind to be choſen for itſelf, nor pleaſant, nor right to be continued in, where ſomething more determinate and fixt may be perhaps attainable,) ſome further inquiry into the ſubject, with all ſuch freedom of thought as the importance of it may ſeem to juſtify, is not only conſiſtent with piety and virtue, but will even be a part of them, and ſhould be rather approved than condemned by all thoſe who are ſincere partiſans and lovers of them.

May I then be permitted to mention the ſomewhat different ways, in which, as has ſometimes ſeemed to me, this inquiry might poſſibly, with ſome reaſonable proſpect of ſucceſs, be conducted? The moſt obvious might, perhaps, to ſome ſeem to be, the beginning with the firſt evangelical promiſe, as it has by many been called, concerning the *ſeed of the woman* in Geneſis the third, and thence proceeding onward to all the other paſſages which have been ſuppoſed to relate to Chriſt, both in that book, and all the following, till we end with Ma-

lachi. This would certainly be ſufficiently methodical. Others however, have aſked, whether it would not be more direct and efficacious to begin with thoſe to which Jeſus and his Apoſtles did, in the firſt inſtance, and more immediately appeal, as we learn from the four Goſpels and the Acts; and having, by juſt rules of interpretation, aſcertained the propriety or otherwiſe of theſe, to proceed, as the caſe ſhould require, to the conſideration, more or leſs, of others? While to ſome perhaps, this other may ſeem to be full as likely (as I own it does to me) to be ſatisfactory and ſucceſsful; the beginning, I mean, with the book of Iſaiah, who is ſometimes called the evangelical prophet, by way of eminence, and whoſe book is, upon many accounts, deſerving of ſome particular regard from every Biblical and Chriſtian critic; and having, by juſt rules of interpretation, aſcertained the meaning of divers ſuppoſed prophecies in him, to paſs on, in the retroſpective or progreſſive way, to ſuch other places and paſſages of the Old Teſtament, as either Jeſus and his Apoſtles have appealed to, or Chriſtian writers and Divines have thought proper, ſince their days, to bring forward.——But this, I ſhall probably be told, has been already done to ſatisfacton, by Biſhop Lowth, whoſe accurate acquaintance with the original Hebrew text, juſt taſte and ſkill in criticiſm, and qualification of almoſt every ſort for a work of this kind, are not like to be exceeded. This I acknowledge to be true in part; and in part only; the Biſhop's work being rather a claſſical than a ſtrictly theological performance; and, as ſuch, not ſuperſeding

ſeding ſuch a ſomewhat different view of this book as I am now, I hope with due deference, recommending.——And if, in this view, I ſhould here ſubjoin ſome few brief remarks upon certain paſſages which have been occaſionally before me heretofore, and which may not, I hope, be utterly unworthy of ſome little attention, ſhould ſuch future commentator, as I am now wiſhing for, ariſe; it is only with the hope of being ſo aiding and aſſiſting, as a child may ſometimes be to a man, and as the architect of a palace or temple may receive help, perchance, in ſome part of his deſign, by the very meaneſt and loweſt of the people.

Theſe prophecies may be ſaid to divide into two principal parts. The firſt of which, ending with chapter xxxixth, might be not improperly intituled *Hezekiah*, or *Iſaiah's Hezekiah*, by the ſame rule as we are wont to ſay Virgil's Æneas, and Shakeſpeare's Henrys or King John: the events of his reign, and ſome principal things relating to him and his times, ſeeming to be the ſubject of it. Of theſe chapters, the firſt ſix, though not foreign to the general deſign, are ſomewhat more unconnected and deſultory. In the ſeventh a more regular and connected train of thought ſeems to open upon us.——Chap. vii. 1ſt, and following. *And it came to paſs in the days of Ahaz*, who was Hezekiah's predeceſſor, as we learn from chap. i. 1; *that Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah, the ſon of Remaliah, king of Iſrael, went up towards Jeruſalem to war againſt it, but could not prevail againſt it. And it was told the houſe of David*, that is, to Ahaz, who was de-

ſcended from him, and ſat upon his throne, *ſaying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim*, or Iſrael; (the capital Samaria being in that tribe; ſee below, ver. 9th) *and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.*

Upon this, as we read in ver. 3d, Iſaiah receives a commiſſion to go and meet Ahaz, at the place there mentioned, taking with him Shear-jaſhub, his ſon, whoſe very name, it ſeems, was prophetical; ſignifying, in the Hebrew language, *a remnant ſhall return*; (which ſeems to be the reaſon why he was to be taken) and to give him this aſſurance, that ſo far from being overcome by theſe two confederate powers, even Ephraim himſelf ſhould, within a ſpace of time which the 8th verſe mentions, ceaſe to be a people. And to confirm Ahaz and his family in the truth of this, which they ſeem not to have received in ſuch a manner as the prophet expected, a miraculous ſign is given, or rather promiſed, which could not fail to come to paſs in a much leſs ſhort and very reaſonable ſpace of time for ſuch a purpoſe; to wit, that a virgin ſhould conceive, and bear a ſon; whoſe name alſo, like that of Shear-jaſhub, ſhould be ſignificant*; meaning, that *God was with them*, or would not forſake them; and, that before this child ſhould have paſſed a period of very early infancy, as is the ſenſe of the 15th and 16th verſes, his kingdom ſhould be

* Hence that reference to both of them in chap. viii. 18th. *Behold, I, and the children which the Lord hath given me, are for ſigns, &c.*

relieved

relieved from the preſent alarming confederacy againſt it, and enjoy, in the mean time, ſome tolerable ſhare of fruitfulneſs and plenty. Still however, the incredulity of Ahaz and of many of his ſubjects, which ſeems, by what is ſaid in ſome of the former verſes, to have had no ſmall degree of impiety and contempt in it, was not to go unpuniſhed; and this is what the following verſes, from the 17th, go on to mention.—In the next chapter, (chapter viiith.) after ſome mention of Maher-ſhalal-haz-baz, which is ſuppoſed to be only another ſignificant name of the ſame miraculous child as has been before mentioned, (as the 4th verſe ſeems to prove) the prophecy thus proceeds;—*The Lord ſpake alſo unto me again, ſaying, Foraſmuch as this people refuſe the waters of Siloah*, (a ſtream or pool in Jeruſalem; from whence probably water for ſome of the temple uſes was ſometimes taken) *that go ſoftly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's ſon*; are more diſpoſed to take part with a heathen king, and the apoſtate ten tribes, than attached to Jehovah; *Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river ſtrong and many, even the king of Aſſyria, and all his glory: and he ſhall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: And he ſhall paſs through Judah; he ſhall overflow and go over, he ſhall reach even to the neck*, to the capital or head city: *and the ſtretching out of his wings ſhall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel*, or nation or people with whom God is; as the cloſe of the tenth verſe, in which this confederacy againſt Judah is ſet at defiance, teaches to explain.—Ver. 11th.

For the Lord ſpake thus to me with a ſtrong hand, and inſtructed me that I ſhould not walk in the way of this people, ſaying, Say ye not, ye pious and religious Jews, *a confederacy, to all them to whom this people ſhall ſay a confederacy;* Do not ye go over to theſe invading and foreign powers, however willing your unbelieving and apoſtate brethren may be to go over to them, and join them; *neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid.* But do ye *ſanctify the Lord of hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he ſhall be for a ſanctuary,* an aſylum or refuge, ſuch a one as is founded upon a rock, as it were, (ſo the oppoſition, very plainly expreſſed in the following part of the verſe, teaches us to explain) *But for a ſtone of ſtumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houſes of Iſrael;* that is, the unbelieving and apoſtate part of them.——Ver. 21ſt. *And they ſhall paſs through it,* i. e. the land, meaning theſe unbelieving and wicked Jews, who were not the prophet's diſciples, ſee ver. 16th; would not adhere to the law and the teſtimony, ſee ver. 16th and 20th; (to the principles of the law of Moſes, and to what the prophet had himſelf teſtified, and ordered to be recorded, as before mentioned in ver. 2d and 16th) but would rather ſeek, like Saul, to thoſe which had familar ſpirits and to wizards, as in ver. 19th; and rather choſe to join with Rezin and Remaliah's ſon, than be true to Jehovah and his worſhip, as is the meaning of ver. 7th and many others; theſe ſhall paſs through it, *hardly beſted and hungry: and it ſhall come to paſs, when they ſhall be hungry, they ſhall fret themſelves,*

themſelves, and curſe their king and their God, and look upward. And they ſhall look unto the earth, and behold trouble and darkneſs, and dimneſs of anguiſh; and they ſhall be driven to darkneſs. Nevertheleſs, (chap. ix. 1ſt) *the dimneſs,* that is, deſpondency and diſtreſs upon this occaſion, *ſhall not be ſuch as was in her vexation,* the vexation of the earth or land, *when at the firſt,* or in the firſt inſtance, *he lightly afflicted* (as in compariſon he may be ſaid to have done) *the land of Zebulon and the land of Napthali,* that is, in the invaſion of it by Tiglath-pileſer, in which theſe tribes or provinces ſuffered principally; (ſee 2 Kings xv. 29th) *and afterwards did more grievouſly afflict her by the way of the ſea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles,* that is, in the ſubſequent invaſion of it by Salmaneſer, (ſee 2 Kings xviii. 9---11.) who carried the ten tribes captive into Aſſyria: No, *the people that walked in darkneſs,* the inhabitants of Judah and Jeruſalem, who have had a ſhare, or muſt have one, in theſe national calamities, *have,* in compariſon of theſe puniſhments of the ten tribes, or kingdom of Iſrael, *ſeen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the ſhadow of death,* who might ſeem to be in danger of the ſame political death or overthrow, *upon them hath the light* of deliverance and of ſafety *ſhined. Thou,* O God, (as is probably the reference) *haſt multiplied the nation, and increaſed its joy;* (this ſome few Hebrew copies are ſaid to juſtify, as the text alſo ſeems to require;) *they joy before thee according to the joy of harveſt, and as men rejoice when they divide the ſpoil.*

ſpoil. For thou haſt broke the yoke of his burden, and the ſtaff of his ſhoulder, the rod of his oppreſſor, as in the day of Midian; in a manner as deciſive and triumphant as was the victory of Gideon over the Midianites. See Judges viith, in illuſtration. *For every battle of the warrior is with confuſed noiſe, and garments rolled in blood*; ſuch is the manner and character of merely human victories, or of victories in general: *but this*, the triumph over Sennacherib and his army in their intended attack upon Judah and Jeruſalem, *ſhall be with burning and fuel of fire*, by fire from heaven as it were, or conſuming fire; ſhall have as little of what is human in it, and be as rapid and deciſive. See 2 Kings xix. 25th, in illuſtration. *For*,—to explain this matter a little more particularly, and give ſome of the reaſons of it,—*unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given:* (meaning, as Grotius and ſome others explain, and as the context and known ſeries of facts ſeem to require, Hezekiah *;) *and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder: and his name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor;* or more properly, perhaps, a wonderful counſellor, or an eminently wiſe perſon;—*the mighty God*, a mighty God or governor; as the Hebrew word God,

* To ſay, as ſome have done, that Hezekiah was already born, is not, in caſe the fact was ſo, to object; but rather, to help forward the argument: for how pertinent and regular, "Unto us a child *is* born, and the government *ſhall* be," &c.? unleſs it ſhall be ſaid, that prophecy may not at any time aſſume the truth of an hiſtorical fact, and build upon it as a foundation; which the religious and judicious will not ſurely affirm.

when

when Jehovah is not added, ſeems to have ſometimes only ſignified: (for which may be ſeen Exod. vii. 1. Pſ. lxxxii. 1. 6. Prov. xvi. 10. John x. 35, and perhaps ſome others;)—*the Father of the age*; or firſt and beſt patron and ſovereign of it; ſo we have before ſeen the word *Olam* to ſignify, (in the note upon Daniel, chap. xii. 2, 3, in a former chapter of this work;) and for *future*, or the age to come, there is nothing anſwering to it in the Hebrew original, as Grotius has obſerved:—*the Prince of peace. Of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end*; they ſhall be as long and progreſſive as his life: *upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom ſhall he ſit, to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with judgment and with juſtice from henceforth, even for ever:* for ſuch it was believed would be in the iſſue its continuance *.

The

* To ſome perhaps it may not be here uſeleſs to be reminded how the kingdom, which began moſt properly in David, and was in its higheſt ſtate of proſperity and glory under Solomon, was divided into the two kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah, by the defection of ten of the tribes to idolatry, in the days of Rehoboam; and that Iſaiah was only ſent to, and his prophecies only reſpect, (unleſs by occaſion only) that of Judah: which gives the reaſon why, in this context, the two invaſions by Tiglath and Salmaneſer, which were invaſions of the idolatrous kingdom of the ten tribes, are only ſlightly mentioned, in compariſon, while that by Sennacherib, which was meant to be the chaſtiſement of Judah and Jeruſalem, that is, of the true worſhippers, as they ſhould have been, is ſo particularly and largely dwelt upon. To the ſame perſons alſo the following notes of time, extracted from Prideaux, may be not diſagreeable.

Jotham

The zeal of the Lord of hoſts will perform this, will do all theſe things in the behalf of that ſettlement and family.—How, in the remaining part of the chapter, the ſame ſubject of denunciations againſt Ephraim or Iſrael, as before, is ſtill further purſued, will be ſeen and acknowledged, it is ſuppoſed, by every reader; and that this is alſo the ſubject generally of chapter xth, till we come to ver. 24th, where Judah ſeems to be again addreſſed in the manner following; *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God of hoſts, O my people that dwelleſt in Zion, Be not afraid of the Aſſyrian: he ſhall ſmite thee with a rod, and lift up his ſtaff againſt thee, after the manner of Egypt,* the threatening manner of Pharoah of old, king of Egypt. *For yet a very little while, and the indignation ſhall ceaſe,*

Before Chriſt.

Jotham dies, and Ahaz begins to reign (Pekah being then king of Iſrael) in the year before Chriſt - 742
Rezin and Pekah make war againſt Ahaz - *ib.*
Invaſion by Tiglath-pileſer - - - 740
Pekah being ſlain is ſucceeded by Hoſhea - 738
Tiglath dies, and is ſucceeded by Salmaneſer - 729
Ahaz dies, and is ſucceeded by Hezekiah - - 727
Invaſion by Salmaneſer, who carries the ten tribes captive to Aſſyria - - - - - - 721
Salmaneſer dies, and is ſucceeded by Sennacherib 715
Invaſion by Sennacherib—Hezekiah's ſickneſs, &c. 714
Embaſſy of Merodach Baladan, of Babylon, to Hezekiah 713
It was not till almoſt one hundred years after (according to Prideaux) that Nebuchadnezzar came up againſt Jeruſalem and took it, and ſo beginning that 70 years captivity of the Jews in Babylon, of which ſo much notice is taken in theſe and almoſt all the other prophecies - 606

and

and mine anger in their deſtruction. And the Lord of hoſts, ſhall ſtir up a ſcourge for him, for Sennacherib, the Aſſyrian, *according to the ſlaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb:* (ſee before upon chap. ix. 4.) *and as his rod was upon the ſea,* upon Pharoah and his hoſt in the Red Sea, *ſo ſhall he lift it up,* that is, upon the Aſſyrian and his army, *after the manner of Egypt,* in a way equally ſignal and miraculous. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that his burden ſhall be taken away from off thy ſhoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke ſhall be deſtroyed becauſe of the anointing;* becauſe that Hezekiah was God's anointed, ſays Grotius; or "from off your ſhoulders," as the lxx read the place, and Biſhop Lowth prefers, as being more eaſy and intelligible. Chooſe which we will, does not much light, in reſpect of a context which was lately before us, in chap. ix. ver. 1---5, break in upon us? For had we not there, as here, the day of Midian, the ſtaff, and yoke, the burden upon the ſhoulder, and other ſomewhat like images of an equally rapid and miraculous deſtruction? And if the images here are to be explained of the overthrow of the Aſſyrian army and Sennacherib, (as all, I think, allow) how can we poſſibly doubt whether the ſame images muſt not there have alſo had the ſame meaning? and we of conſequence adhere to the honeſt and good old Engliſh tranſlation of the place, rather than adopt the different one propoſed by the great prelate above mentioned? and to which perhaps the obſervation formerly made (in the note upon Dan. xi. 31ſt)

concerning modern tranſlation, may be not, only with due deference to epiſcopacy and learning be this ſpoken, quite inapplicable *.——And if ſo, why then not explain what we read in chap. xith. of the ſafety and felicity of the church and nation in the days of Hezekiah? or much doubt, whether chap. xiith. will not be beſt conceived of as a ſong of praiſe ſuppoſed to be ſuitable to theſe times? and deſigned to be ſaid or ſung upon ſome proper occaſions?---In the following chapters to the xxiiid. the characters and fortunes of the neighbouring nations to Judea are more or leſs particularly repreſented; and may be therefore, in ſuch a general ſurvey as this, not improperly paſſed over; unleſs what is ſaid in the latter part of chap. xxiid. concerning ſome few affairs in Hezekiah's court and family, may be thought to deſerve ſome exception, as tending to ſhew what affairs and times of the world the prophet ſuppoſed himſelf to be deſcribing.---And of almoſt all the remaining chapters of this part little more particular notice, though not preciſely for the ſame reaſon, need perhaps be taken.——Of chap. xxiv. the ſubject is, the calamitous ſtate of the land in conſequence of the judgments of God upon it for its vices; to be explained moſt reaſonably and pro-

* To ſay, as ſome have done, that in chap. x. 5th, a new prophecy begins, is certainly not true. The king of Aſſyria is indeed in that verſe very beautifully, apoſtrophized as being an inſtrument only in the hands of God, to do his work, and be then laid aſide; which is alſo the meaning of other ſubſequent paſſages: and this has a fine poetical effect; but the ſame ſubject is continued as before.

bably

bably of the two invaſions of it before referred to, the firſt by Tiglath, and the ſecond by Salmanezer. —Then follow ſongs of praiſe, and predictions or deſcriptions of a peaceful and happy ſtate of things, in chapters xxv. xxvi. and xxvii. ſuch as the defeat of Sennacherib and deſtruction of his army may be ſuppoſed to have ſuggeſted, and which may ſeem to be beſt accounted for when applied to the ſtate of the church and nation then following.—In the xxviiith chapter all thoſe ideas ſeem to be renewed upon us which we have very much had before in the viith and viiith chapters; in the laſt more eſpecially. Ephraim or Iſrael, that is, the kingdom of the ten tribes, is awfully threatened: Judah is alſo to receive ſome chaſtiſement, though not of the ſame vindictive ſort and very ſad degree; and for the ſame vices as were formerly mentioned, viz. atheiſm, unbelief of God's word, contempt of his true fear and worſhip, and propenſity to apoſtacy and idolatry; &c. which are alſo by much the ſame imagery repreſented; more eſpecially in ver. 14th, &c. *Therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye ſcornful men, which rule this people which is in Jeruſalem. Becauſe ye have ſaid, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs through, it ſhall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge,* that is, images or idols, which under the Jewiſh diſpenſation were ſo ſpoken of; *and under falſehood* (as ye religious Jews chooſe to think it) *have we hid ourſelves: Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God,* or Jehovah God,

God, *Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner ſtone, a ſure foundation*; plainly meaning, that he himſelf was ſo; or in other words, that in Zion, and in the religion and worſhip profeſſed and taught there, there was firm and ſure footing or ſtanding, which could not be ſaid of the idols and the idolatrous worſhip in which they had placed their confidence: (ſee in illuſtration, chap. viii. 12, 13, 14. Pſ. xlvith. Prov. xiv. 26. xviii. 10, &c.) *he that believeth ſhall not make haſte*, need not do, but may be calm and tranquil. Such is certainly the primary and moſt obvious meaning. And thus may the way be ſaid to be prepared, as it were, for that deſcription, or account of the invaſion of Judah in particular by Sennacherib, which is acknowledged by all to be the ſubject of the xxixth and the four following chapters: Of one of which the beginning, in that view in which I now write, may perhaps deſerve ſome little notice. Chap. xxxii. 1ſt, &c. *Behold, a king ſhall reign in righteouſneſs, and princes ſhall rule in judgment. And a man ſhall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempeſt*, &c. Let this, and what follows, be a deſcription of Hezekiah; as will not probably be denied, unleſs by ſuch as attend to the ſound of words only; and who can much wonder at the interpretation before given of certain paſſages in chapters ixth and xith, &c. which contain only ſimilar ſentiments? Indeed that Iſaiah is one of thoſe writers whoſe rich and ſplendid language and imagery do not always ſupport ideas equal to what a modern reader is ſometimes

times tempted to expect, has been already verified in part, and may perhaps be more ſo by other paſſages *.—In the xxxiiid. chapter, ver. 1ſt, Sennacherib himſelf, the inſtrument of all this chaſtiſement of the Jewiſh people, is addreſſed in a very lively manner, and threatened with awful puniſhment in his turn; which the whole chapter goes on afterwards to illuſtrate in a varied and very beautiful manner; agreeable to a known Scripture principle, that the wicked and heatheniſh are only inſtruments in the hand of God, to puniſh, upon the proper occaſions, his own people, but not therefore themſelves to eſcape their own puniſhment in time; which has been before, in chap. x. 5th, ſuggeſted:—and then follows, in the xxxivth chapter (for we are now plainly drawing to a cloſe of theſe times and affairs) a prophecy of the overthrow of Edom, and of the other enemies of the Jewiſh church and nation, amongſt which Edom ſeems to have been the moſt malignant and inimical, (ſee Pſ. cxxxviii. 7th);—and afterwards of their peaceful and happy ſtate, in the xxxvth. This being deſcribed in the 5th and 6th

* "I wiſh," ſaid a venerable and pious relative, in the hearing of the writer of theſe papers, when a child, "that our miniſter, "inſtead of expounding the Pſalms, would go into the Prophets, "and explain the deep things there." Had the worthy Diſſenting Miniſter, (Mr. Robert Dawſon, of Hinckley) who is ſaid to have been learned and judicious above what uſually happens to the men of his denomination, done what this worthy and good parent of mine deſired, may it not be queſtioned, whether he would not have been diſappointed? and who ſhall ſay, that the miniſter's more critical acquaintance with theſe ſubjects, was not that which hindered?

verſes by terms which, taken literally, may be not ill applied to the miracles of the Goſpel, has led many to ſuppoſe that the Goſpel ſtate and times may have been intended in it: which ſeems not however very well to accord to the general context and connection, nor to what is ſaid afterwards of the high-way for the holy people or nation, and of their return to Zion; and ſtill leſs perhaps to the ſubjects entered upon in the four following chapters, viz. in the xxxvith and xxxviith, the invaſion of Judah and Jeruſalem by Sennacherib, related hiſtorically; and in chapters xxxviiith and xxxixth, the like hiſtorical account of Hezekiah's ſickneſs and recovery. As if the deſign had purpoſely been, by ſo placing them, to make them ſerve as a key, or at leaſt to ſuggeſt one, to all that has gone before, and in this way juſtify the interpretation which has been hitherto given of theſe prophecies.

The *ſecond* part of theſe prophecies may be not improperly entitled The *Return*, The Return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon; by the ſame rule as we ſometimes ſay, Paradiſe loſt, and Paradiſe regained; that return being confeſſedly and moſt apparently the ſubject of it. But this, it is ſaid by ſome, is not the only ſubject, nor that which is of the higheſt order and importance. There being, it is ſaid, a certain myſtical and more ſpiritual ſenſe concealed, and ſometimes occaſionally and very prominently diſcovering itſelf, under this other; and the return of the Jews from Babylon being evidently deſigned to prefigure a deliverance, or redemption,

redemption, of a much higher order, even that of mankind by Jeſus Chriſt. But not now to diſcuſs the probability or otherwiſe of this; which, it is hoped, that able and good commentator, whom I have above ventured to ſpeak of, will conſider; it may be allowed me, it is hoped, to confine myſelf, in this brief and very general ſurvey, to the primary and moſt obvious meaning only; partly as being the firſt in order, and neceſſary to be aſcertained, before we can well proceed to the other; and as we ſhall then probably proceed to it under circumſtances of ſome peculiar advantage*. May I

* *Nous nous ſommes bornez au ſens litteral*; ſays Calmet, in his preface; "I have confined myſelf in theſe comments to the "primary ſenſe only:"—*ce le fondement de tous les autres ſans, et de toutes les autres explications*: "It is the moſt proper baſis of all the "other, and upon which, previouſly laid, they can alone be well "founded."—*Si l'on etoit plus verſé dans le ſens litteral des Ecritures, il ſeroit aiſe après cela de donner de bonnes explications ſpirituelles*: "And would men be careful to become thorough "maſters of this ſenſe firſt, they might then proceed to the "conſideration of any other with particular advantage."—So this judicious, though Popiſh commentator, as ſeems to me at leaſt, in this inſtance; very wiſely diſcriminating between the primary and ſecondary, or, in the ſtyle of ſome, the literal and ſpiritual ſenſe of the ſcriptures; ſuppoſing them to be things of quite diſtinct conſideration; and leaving us at liberty, after having firſt aſcertained the one, to purſue, if we pleaſe, or let alone, the other. Inſtead of which the more uſual method has, I fear, been this, not to conceive of the two or more meanings diſtinctly, as things of independant and ſeparate conſideration; but rather to blend them together; and flitting, as occaſion ſerves, and without any fixt and governing principle, from one to the other, as if the deſign had been (which it certainly was not) to diſcredit, rather than explain, the Scriptures.

then be allowed to put down, without cenſure, the obſervations following?—Chap. xl. 1ſt verſe, and following. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſaith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jeruſalem, and ſay unto her, that her warfare is accompliſhed, that her iniquity is pardoned: for ſhe hath received of the* LORD's *hand double*, as it were, *for all her ſins.* This muſt be underſtood only popularly, and not ſtrictly, if double puniſhment or chaſtiſement be intended. *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderneſs*; methinks I hear ſuch a one crying, and this is what he ſays; *Prepare ye the way of the* LORD, or of Jehovah; *make ſtrait in the deſert a highway for our God. Let every valley be exalted: and every mountain and hill be made low: and the crooked be made ſtraight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the* LORD *ſhall be revealed*, his glorious power, as well as faithfulneſs in the fulfilment of his promiſes; *and all fleſh*, and not the Jews only, *ſhall ſee it together: for the mouth of the* LORD *hath ſpoken it*; hath long ſince promiſed what is now to be accompliſhed. *The voice ſaid cry*, or make proclamation; *And he ſaid*, that is, the perſon to whom this firſt voice was addreſſed, (for the idea ſeems to be this, of heralds ſtationed at proper diſtances, and forwarding the notice from one to another) *What ſhall I cry?* And he ſaid in return, *All fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field. The graſs withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God*, his word of promiſe, or of prophecy, concerning the reſtoration of his people from their captivity, *ſhall ſtand for ever.*

And

And ſo no doubt is the meaning of what follows to be conceived of. *O thou that bringeſt good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain*, that thou mayeſt be the better heard, and that ſuch good news may ſpread the wider: *O thou that bringeſt good tidings to Jeruſalem, lift up thy voice with ſtrength: lift it up, be not afraid; ſay unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God. Behold, the* LORD *God will come with a ſtrong hand, and his arm ſhall rule for him: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He ſhall feed his flock*, the Jewiſh people, whom in this inſtance he has taken the care of, *like a ſhepherd: he ſhall gather the lambs in his arm*, as it were, *and carry them in his boſom, and gently lead thoſe that are with young*; the women, and children, and more feeble and infirm, as well as ſtronger perſons.---There then follows, in the 12th and ſubſequent verſes, to the end, a remarkably lively deſcription of the power and ſupremacy of God, and more eſpecially in reſpect of the heathen idols, which ſome readers may perhaps be tempted to think rather foreign to the ſubject; and of which I doubt, whether the pertinence and beautiful propriety have been ſeen and ſet in ſo ſtrong a light by ſome of the commentators as they ſhould have been. The Jews, we are to remember, were at Babylon in captivity; but with a promiſe from God of a return; for which things are ſuppoſed to be preparing. It was therefore a queſtion now at iſſue between Jehovah and the heathen idols, more eſpecially thoſe of Babylon, whither they had been carried captive, and where they were ſtill detained,

whether this great work of their deliverance, and which their God Jehovah had ſo explicitly promiſed, could be effected? If it were, he was the true God; but if it were not, he was no better than they; or rather, his people being ſtill in their power, they ſhould ſeem to be the greater of the two. Hence, no doubt, we are to account for the lively deſcriptions of his power and ſupremacy which follow in this chapter, and the very pertinent and conſolatory addreſs to his people in captivity, grounded upon them, in ver. 27th, *Why ſayeſt thou, O Jacob, and ſpeaketh O Iſrael, my way is hid from the* LORD, *and my judgment paſſed over*, &c. and ſo certainly, are we to explain and account for all that ſeries of like lofty deſcriptions of himſelf, and inſulting challenges of the heathen idols, which we have in all the following chapters to the xlviith; and which might therefore perhaps juſtify us, after this account given of the general character and nature of them, in paſſing them over without further notice; were it not on account of ſome incidental and rather curious particulars which occur in them, or elſe peculiarity of manner in which the general ſubject is at times treated. In this latter view what we next read is not perhaps a little obſervable.—Chap. xli. 1. 2. &c. *Keep ſilence before me, O iſlands; and let the people* of them, both they and their idols, *renew their ſtrength* upon the occaſion: *let them come near, let them ſpeak: let us come near together to judgment. Who raiſed up the righteous man from the Eaſt*, meaning no doubt Abraham, the father of the Jewiſh nation, who was of Ur in Chaldæa,

Chaldæa, (ſee Gen. xii. 1ſt, &c.) *called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him ruler over kings? He gave them* (ſee Gen. xivth in illuſtration) *as the duſt to his ſword, and as driven ſtubble to his bow.—Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the* LORD *the firſt, and to the laſt, I am he. The iſles ſaw it;* theſe ſmall and young beginnings of the Jewiſh church and nation; *and feared: the ends of the earth drew near and came. They helped every one his neighbour*; that is, in the ſupport and cauſe of idolatry, when they perceived a new ſyſtem was beginning; *and every one ſaid to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldſmith*, &c.---*But thou, Iſrael, art my ſervant; thou, Jacob, whom I have choſen, the ſeed of Abraham my friend*, the righteous man above mentioned; and ſeemingly added in illuſtration. *Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and ſaid unto thee, Thou art my ſervant, I have choſen thee, and not caſt thee away. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God: I will ſtrengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee*, &c. &c. ——And now how plain, with reſpect to general meaning only, and the leading ideas (for it is not poſſible, in this brief ſurvey, to deſcend to and adjuſt all the ſubordinate particulars) would ſeem to be what follows in chap. xlii. 1ſt, &c. *Behold my ſervant, whom I uphold*; that ſervant mentioned in the former chapter, and whom I have there ſignified

my intention of holding, or of upholding, in many paſſages of it, in ver. 10, 13, 14th, more eſpecially; *mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth*; (for which ſee the ſame paſſages, and further, chap. xliii. 1. xliv. 1. 2. xlv. 4. xlviii. 12.) *I have put my ſpirit upon him*, have honoured him with inſpiration and prophecy, and given him ſuperior means of knowledge above others; (ſee in illuſtration, chap. xliv. 3. lix. ult.) *he ſhall bring forth judgment* or righteouſneſs (ſhall be able to teach it upon occaſion; or, as perhaps the meaning may be, and probably is, ſhall be an inſtance or illuſtration of it in his own caſe, that is, of my juſtice and faithfulneſs) *to the Gentiles. He ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his voice to be heard in the ſtreet. A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, nor the ſmoaking flax ſhall he not quench: He ſhall bring forth judgment unto truth*, eſtabliſhment or victory. Whether theſe paſſages intend the gradual and eaſy manner in which ſome rays of uſeful knowledge concerning the Divine power, faithfulneſs, and juſtice would proceed from the Jews to the Gentile world, or were rather meant to expreſs the peaceableneſs of their march, and inoffenſiveneſs of behaviour, from Babylon to their own land, my future commentator will, it is hoped, conſider. *He ſhall not fail nor be diſcouraged*, (divers promiſes of this have been made in the former chapter: and ſee alſo chap. xl. 27th) *till he have ſet judgment in the earth*, have given a proof, and been an inſtance of it; *and the iſles ſhall wait for his law*; in ſome meaſure and degree ſhall receive it from him. *Thus ſaith the* LORD *God, that created*

the

the heavens, &c.---*I the* LORD *hath called thee in righteouſneſs*, (ſee in illuſtration, chap. xliii. 1.) *and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee; and will give thee for a covenant of the people*, a ſort of implied covenant and token for good to them; *for a light of the Gentiles*, if they will be inſtructed by it, and improve the opportunity: And in this way and ſenſe, *To open the blind eyes, to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs out of the priſon houſe*. In ſhort, *I am the* LORD, or Jehovah; *that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another; nor my praiſe to graven images*; which is the reaſon why I will do all theſe things. There then follow certain ſtrong aſſertions of the foreknowledge and power of God, and declarations of the triumphant and victorious manner in which he was reſolved, in ſpite of every kind of oppoſition, to effectuate the deliverance of his people. After which, in an equally triumphant and victorious, though ſomewhat different manner, the general ſubject proceeds; ver. 17th, &c. *They ſhall be turned back, they ſhall be greatly aſhamed that truſt in graven images; that ſay to the molten images, Ye are our gods. Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind; that ye may ſee.* And yet why do I thus reproach and inſult theſe heathens, when my own people have been upon ſome former occaſions little leſs culpable? For in this way of idolatry, *Who is blind but my ſervant?* has been more ſo than Jacob or Iſrael? *or deaf, as my meſſenger that I ſent?* may be ſaid to have ſent with inſtructions, and meant to be ſo in a ſort, to the other nations? *Who is blind as he that is perfect,*

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or has been ſufficiently inſtructed? *and blind as the* LORD'S *ſervant;* my own ſervant Jacob or Iſrael? *Seeing many things, thou obſerveſt not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.* But why then ſhew ſuch particular tenderneſs towards them, if, in this reſpect, they had been ſo little better than others? Anſwer, *The* LORD *is well pleaſed* to do this *for his righteouſneſs ſake; he will magnifie the law, and make it honourable*; will deliver them, though not for their own merit, for the ſake of his own honour, and the credit of the Moſaic law and diſpenſation. This is ſuppoſed, in the next and following verſes, to explain every thing, and give the reaſon, both of the captivity, and the reſtoration from it. Ver. 24. 25th. *Who gave Jacob for a ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robbers? Did not the* LORD, *he againſt whom we have ſinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his law. Therefore hath he poured upon him the fury of his anger,* &c.—*But now, thus ſaith the* LORD *that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Iſrael; fear not: for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou paſſeſt through the waters,* &c. Such is the beginning of chap. xliiid, and the tendency of it, to eſtabliſh what has been before ſaid of the preceding. Of the remainder of it further notice need not now be taken; nor perhaps of any of the reſt, (the general ſubject and deſign of them being before mentioned) till we come to the xlviiith, where a ſomewhat new manner of thinking, though upon the ſame general ſubject, ſeems to ſuggeſt itſelf. Chap. xlviii. 1ſt. *Hear this, O houſe of Jacob, which are called by the name of Iſrael, and are come forth of*

the waters of Judah, which ſwear by the name of the LORD, *and make mention of the God of Iſrael,* &c. To ſome perhaps it may have appeared ſtrange; the ten tribes, or kingdom of Iſrael, having been carried captive into Aſſyria, and never more been heard of, as is commonly ſuppoſed; that the language in this ſecond part of theſe prophecies, and which certainly intends Judah and Jeruſalem only, or however principally, ſhould be ſtill this of Jacob or Iſrael. Whether the reaſon of this be, to ſuggeſt, that ſome of thoſe ten tribes might poſſibly find their way back to their own land again, when the Jews ſhould be reſtored; and that the remainder of them muſt not be given up, and thought of, as wholly loſt; I do not now ſtay to enquire: but think it of importance to obſerve, that we ſeem to have here this generality of language, in theſe prophecies, very properly narrowed, and limited to that which is plainly its moſt proper ſubject, namely, to ſuch of the poſterity of Jacob or Iſrael as had ſprung or derived their origin from Judah; and that to this, which is here ſo ſeaſonably mentioned, we may do well to attend, as was perhaps the true reaſon of ſuch a ſeaſonable ſuggeſtion of it, in the expoſition of the next chapter. ---Chap. xlix. 1ſt. verſe and following. *Liſten, O iſles unto me: and hearken, ye people, from afar: The* LORD *hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.* The like has been ſaid before of Jacob or Iſrael, in chap. xliv. 1, 2. xlvi. 3, 4. *And he hath made my mouth like a ſharp ſword, in the ſhadow of his hand hath he hid me; and made me a poliſhed ſhaft, in his quiver hath he hid me.* See in

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chap. xli. 16, 17, &c. ſomething of the like nature. *And he ſaid unto me, Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified*; in whom, and by my dealings with whom, my power, juſtice, wiſdom, goodneſs and faithfulneſs ſhall be manifeſted, and be to me in the iſſue for a praiſe and a glory; ſee before, in chap. xlii. 8, 21. xliii. 21. xlv. *ult.* xlvi. *ult.* xlviii. 9, 10, 11. for an illuſtration. *Then I ſaid*, I that came forth of the waters of Judah, *I have laboured in vain, I have ſpent my ſtrength for nought, and in vain; yet ſurely my judgment is with the* LORD, *and my work with my God.* If from me, and by means of me, the heathen nations have not been ſo enlightened and profited, and God ſo much glorified, as might have been expected, yet ſomething, it is hoped, has been done of this ſort. This chapter, like ſome others hereafter, is highly poetical and dramatic; and it is the Jewiſh church that is ſpeaking. *And now ſaith the* LORD, *that formed me from the womb to be his ſervant*, (as before in ver. 1ſt.) *to bring Jacob again to him, Though Iſrael*, the whole of Iſrael, or of the ten tribes, *be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the* LORD, *and my God ſhall be my ſtrength.* Such ſeems to me to be, in this paſſage, in reſpect of the ten tribes that would be generally miſſing, the very beautiful and compaſſionate reference. To which, what follows, in a kind of poetical or prophetic climax, adds great confirmation. *And he ſaid, It is a light thing that thou ſhouldeſt be my ſervant to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael*, as many of them

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as may be ſtill in being, and are yet capable of it: *I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles,* (ſee chap. lx. 3d) *that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation,* an evidence and proof of my ſaving power, and that there is none other God and Saviour but me, *unto the ends of the earth*; ſee chap. xlv. ver. 5th to the end, in illuſtration. Let thus much be approved, and the remainder, to the end, will be not very difficult; to ſuch more eſpecially who ſhall read it as poetry, and explain it with a due degree of liberality and latitude accordingly.——Of chap. l.th, which is dramatic like the former, the deſign ſeems to be, to lay upon the Jewiſh church or nation the blame of her captivity, and of all that ſhe had ſuffered in it. This, in the firſt five verſes, is flatly and directly charged upon her. To which, as ſeems to me, the Jewiſh church is repreſented, as replying, in the language of acknowledgment, repentance, and prayer, (*The* LORD *God hath given me the tongue of the learned,* of one taught, diſciplined, or inſtructed; ſee Pſ. xciv. 12; add alſo chap. xlix. 8, in illuſtration) in the 6th and following. To which again, God is repreſented as making a reply, and diſtinguiſhing between ſuch as were and ſuch as were not ſo reformed and amended, in the two laſt, or 10th and 11th verſes of the chapter: As he is certainly alſo doing in the 1ſt and following verſes of the 51ſt. chapter. Of which, perhaps, it is not now neceſſary to take any further notice than this only; that there is in it, and more eſpecially as we draw toward the end of it, a moſt apparent bearing down, and tendency, towards the main ſubject

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of this poetical prophecy; which is ſo fully expreſſed in chap. lii. as to render a more particular notice of it, in this view, highly expedient.—Chap. lii. 1ſt. &c. *Awake, awake, put on thy ſtrength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jeruſalem, the holy city: for henceforth there ſhall no more come into thee the uncircumciſed and the unclean.* Does not this determine the meaning of chap. xxxv. 8th? *Shake thyſelf from the duſt; ariſe, and ſit down, O Jeruſalem: looſe thyſelf from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus ſaith the* LORD, *Ye have ſold yourſelves for nought,* by your unprofitable idolatries and ſins; *and ye ſhall be redeemed without money,* by my free goodneſs only. *For thus ſaith the* LORD *God, My people went down afore time into Egypt, to ſojourn there; and the Aſſyrian oppreſſed them,* did after this do ſo, *without cauſe,* without any juſt cauſe on his part, which he was able to aſſign. *Now therefore, what have I here, ſaith the* LORD, *that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them make them to howl, ſaith the* LORD; *and my name continually every day is blaſphemed. Therefore my people ſhall know my name,* that it is a faithful and true name, or, that I am the true and a faithful God, however ſome may chooſe to think and ſay the contrary: *therefore they ſhall know in that day,* the day of my appearance and of my people's deliverance, *that I am he that doth ſpeak,* or have promiſed: *Behold it is I.* After this follow certain paſſages, which we have before had in ſubſtance, in chap. xlth; as if the deſign was to intimate,

mate, that the ſubject, which was there opening, was here drawing to a finiſh:—and then, as if nothing, in the way of previous notice or preparation, now remained to be ſpoken, *Depart ye, Depart ye, go ye out from thence*, that is, from Babylon; *touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midſt of her; be ye clean, that bear*, whoſe office it is more eſpecially to bear, *the veſſels of the* LORD, intending the prieſts moſt probably; ſee alſo Ezra 1ſt. in illuſtration. *For ye ſhall not go out with haſte*, as your fathers did from Egypt; *nor with flight: for the* LORD *will go before you; and the God of Iſrael*, whoſe people ye are, *will be your rere-ward*, will follow to defend, as well as lead you. And what of all this will be the conſequence? *Behold, my ſervant*, this ſervant of mine, Jacob or Iſrael, *ſhall deal prudently* or wiſely; inſtructed, by calamities and adverſity, ſhall do ſo now more than formerly; if that be the right tranſlation; (for others ſay, "ſhall be proſperous") *he ſhall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.*——*As many were* before *aſtoniſhed at thee*, at thy ſufferings and calamities: (*his viſage*, to ſpeak perſonally of him, *was ſo marred more than any man*, than any other man's; *and his form more than the ſons of men*, more than what is the caſe with mankind uſually) *So ſhall he* now, in a different way, *beſprinkle*, or ſpread over with aſtoniſhment, that is, in his return, and by the obſervation of his renewed and better ſtate and fortunes, *many nations: the kings*, or great ones, *ſhall ſhut their mouths at him*, and deride him no longer (ſee in illuſtration, chap. xlix. 7th): *for that which had not been told them*

them ſhall they ſee, and that which they had not heard ſhall they conſider. But alas, how little has that been the caſe hitherto. For, in this reſpect and inſtance, chap. liii. 1ſt. and following, *Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the* LORD *been revealed?* How little attention has been given to the exertions of it upon former occaſions? *For he*, this Jacob or Iſrael, *ſhall grow up before him as a tender plant*, ſo weak may ſeem to have been his beginning, *and as a root out of a dry ground;* for ſo may Ur of the Chaldeans, whence Abraham came, be very juſtly conceived of: (ſee before, chap. xli. 2, 3, and chap. li. 2, in illuſtration) *he hath*, in this reſpect *no* particular *form nor comelineſs: and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him*, or be particularly attached to him. *He is deſpiſed and rejected of men;* has been generally ſo thought of and treated, by the other nations of the world, in moſt periods of his hiſtory; *a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief;* ſuch was his caſe in Egypt more eſpecially, as well as in ſome other inſtances: (ſee chap. lii. 4, 5, in illuſtration) *and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not*; were not ſo faithfully attached to him as we ſhould have been; the ſuppoſed language probably of certain falſe perſons and apoſtates. But notwithſtanding this, *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our ſorrows: we did indeed eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities: the*

chaſtiſement

chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him; and with his ſtripes we are healed. All we like ſheep have gone aſtray; we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. This, I conceive, to be nothing more than the language which we ourſelves are taught and wont to uſe upon our days of public faſting, prayer, and humiliation; when individuals, in their private and perſonal capacities, are called upon to deprecate thoſe evils which their ſins have brought upon the public; though the nation or public is after all but another manner of conceiving of theſe ſame privates or individuals; and the like eaſy figure of ſpeech we have had before in this very prophet, in chap. l. 1ſt, where the mother and her children, the latter as ſinning, and the former as ſuffering for it, i. e. for the iniquities of her children, or conſtituents, is ſo conceived of. After which, if admitted, what we read in ver. 7th, may not be reckoned very difficult: Verſe 8th, *He*, this public man or perſon, *was taken*, like a criminal as it were, *from priſon and from judgment: and who ſhall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living;* taken away by captivity from Judea, the only deſirable land to live in, and ſuppoſed by ſome to be ſometimes called the land of the living by way of eminence: *for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and the rich in his death;* with the proud, proſperous, and wicked heathen people, the Babylonians, in his political death or captivity; (ſee before, in chap. li. 14, ſomething like

this) *becauſe*, or rather, *though he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth*; to ſignify in this poetical way, how lamentable it was that the public ſhould ſuffer ſo much, and at large, for the offences of individuals. Let ſo much be true, (I will not poſitively affirm that it is*) and what follows to the end, concerning the ſubſequent increaſe and proſperity, will not be reckoned to have much difficulty in it. And the ſame may be ſaid of what next follows, in chap. liv. *Sing, O barren*, or unproductive church or nation, as it were hitherto; *thou that didſt not bear*, as it were, in the time of thy captivity: *break forth into ſinging, and cry aloud, thou that didſt not travail with child: for*

* To ſome, it may not, perhaps, be wholly uſeleſs to obſerve, that the writer of theſe papers is not the firſt, though without doubt, the meaneſt, of thoſe who have underſtood this famous context otherwiſe than of Jeſus Chriſt: Grotius, as is well known, explaining it of Jeremiah; and a learned profeſſor abroad (as I learn from Monthly Review, vol. xv. in the Appendix) of Hezekiah's ſickneſs and recovery; each of them ſeeming to be led to it by that deſire, which perhaps every reader feels, of finding ſome more cloſe and pertinent connection of it with what has gone before. To which may be added, that nothing is more common in theſe prophecies than that figure of perſonification upon which the interpretation above given is grounded, (as, "*why ſayeſt thou*, O Jacob, and *ſpeakeſt*, O Iſrael, &c.) and again, that in the reading of the 52d chapter there is not perhaps any reader, following the common ſcheme, who is not aſtoniſhed, when he comes to the 13th verſe, at the prodigious gulph, precipice, or chaſm which lies before him. Biſhop Lowth, however, in his note upon that verſe, has done his beſt, it muſt be acknowledged, to aſſiſt the reader in his paſſage over. It has not appeared to me to be ſatisfactory.

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more are the children of the deſolate, of her that has been captive and deſolate, (ſee chap. xlix. 21,) *than the children of the married wife, ſaith the Lord.* Before, in chap. lth, the ſtate of the Jewiſh church in her captivity is ſuppoſed to be that of divorce, in this of widowhood; (ſee ver. 4th and 5th) the reproach of which however ſhould be ſoon taken away, and loſs of it repaired, by ſuch increaſe as the text mentions; and ſee alſo chap. xlix. from verſe 17th to the 22d. The remainder to the end is only further expreſſive, in a poetical way, of the ſame proſperous and happy ſtate of things. After which follow, in chap. lv. ſuch congratulations and exhortations, to the true enjoyment of it, as may ſeem in ſuch circumſtances to be very reaſonable. Ver. 1ſt. *Ho, every one that thirſteth come ye to the waters.* See a like exhortation to the enjoyment of peace and proſperity, in chap. xii. 3. And for this and the next verſe alſo, Prov. ixth, where the ſatisfactions of religion and of virtue are by images of no very different ſort repreſented. Or, in other words, *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your ſoul ſhall live:* (the turn of thought in Prov. ix. 6th is much the ſame) *and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David;* meaning ſuch perpetuity and ſtability of government, and ſuch peace and proſperity, in caſe of obedience, as were promiſed to him and his houſe, in the covenant which God had made with him. See 2 Sam. vii. 8—17th, and Pſ. lxxxixth, throughout, in illuſtration. *Behold, I have given him for a witneſs to the people, a leader and commander,* an

inſtructor, or inſtruction rather, *to the people;* as a ſort of firſt inſtance and token for good to them, and aſſurance, ſo long as his hiſtory remains, and knowledge of the covenant made with him, that I will not forſake them*. *Behold, thou,* O Jewiſh

* It tends much to the confirmation of this to obſerve in how many and various places the name of David is brought forward in the prophets, and how dear the memory of him has been to the Jews in all times. So, for inſtance, we have ſeen Hezekiah to be ſpoken of as a root, or rather, ſhoot or branch, proceeding from this ſtock, in chap. xi. 1ſt; as Zerubbabel is alſo ſuppoſed to be in Zachariah, chap. iii. 8. and vi. 12. for the ſame reaſon: To which may be added, Jer. xxiii. 5. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. 24. Hoſea iii. 5; in which his name, ſomething like Pharoah among the Egyptians, and Cæſar amongſt the Romans, ſeems to be put, in honour of the firſt bearer or founder, for a good Jewiſh prince or governor in general. To which however muſt be ſubjoined, as of ſtill more pertinency to be obſerved, that when Jeſus of Nazareth made his appearance in the world, and was propoſed as the Meſſiah, or King of the Jews, no queſtion ſeems to have been more at iſſue among the contending parties than this, whether he was or was not the ſon of David? And here I take the opportunity of aſking, whether we may not from hence, and as guided by this clue, deduce our cleareſt and beſt notion of the Meſſiah character, as it ſeems to have exiſted amongſt the Jews? We have above ſeen, how, in the covenant made to David, the fulleſt aſſurances were given him, that though his children might do iniquity, and both deſerve and ſuffer chaſtiſement, yet ſtill the ſucceſſion to the throne in his family was not to be cut off, but ſhould be for ever. And how then can we wonder, that amongſt the Jews, when ſubdued by the Romans, there ſhould ſpring up amongſt them the hope and even earneſt expectation of ſome ſuch *anointed* or kingly perſon of this race or lineage to be their deliverer, as appears to have in fact exiſted in the days of Jeſus? Or again, very greatly wonder, the purely ſpiritual and abſtract nature of the kingdom which

Jewiſh church or community, *ſhall call a nation that thou knoweſt not, and nations that knew not thee*

which Jeſus profeſſed to ſet up conſidered, that the whole Jewiſh nation did not all at once, and many of them never, receive him under this character? or again very greatly wonder, that the Jews of this preſent time are ſtill waiting for ſome ſuch temporal, in part, and not merely ſpiritual deliverer? And here alſo I would aſk, whether, by means of theſe notions, we may not be aſſiſted in the explication of another paſſage in this prophet of a ſort of inſulated or detached kind, in reſpect of the place in which it is found, and which ſhould not perhaps be omitted wholly in this analyſis. Chap. ii. 2. 3. 4. 5. *And it came to paſs in the laſt days, that the mountain of the* LORD'S *houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the hills: and all nations ſhall flow unto it. And many people ſhall go and ſay, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the* LORD, *to the houſe of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion ſhall go forth the law, and the word of the* LORD *from Jeruſalem. And he ſhall judge among the nations,* &c.—" Wherever the latter times " are mentioned in Scripture the days of the Meſſiah are always " meant, ſays Kimchi on this place; and in regard to this " place nothing can be more clear and certain." So Biſhop Lowth; and had the Biſhop been only ſo explicit as to inform his reader, that Kimchi was a modern Jew, whoſe Meſſiah was not yet come, but expected, he would perhaps have been as near the prophet's or poet's general idea as, in reſpect of a ſtate of things probably yet future, is to be expected. For that the mountain of the LORD'S houſe means the Chriſtian church ſeems not to me a very eaſy but rather ſtiff and remote interpretation; a Jew perhaps might ſay, not an interpretation, but rather new ſubſtitution; and I am miſtaken if ſomething may not occur hereafter to confirm the other notion.

So much I have ventured to ſay, miſtakenly perhaps, but certainly not malignantly, concerning the nature of the covenant and promiſes made to David; and whether in that more ancient one made to Abraham, as recorded in Gen. xiith and xviith

thee ſhall run unto thee, becauſe of the LORD *thy God, and for the holy one of Iſrael, for he hath glorified thee*; to ſignify, ſeemingly, the influence which the return would have, and very probably had, in making proſelytes. And therefore, O ye people of every nation, *Seek ye the* LORD *while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the* LORD, *and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* That ſuch is the relative connection of this paſſage, though in itſelf, and independant of every connection, ſo intrinſically excellent, may perhaps become ſtill more evident

more particularly, any thing much more ſpiritual and evangelical be intended, may perhaps be queſtioned, and might be very uſefully inquired into, were not this note already ſufficiently long, and the ſubject not in the firſt inſtance before me. Highly probable it is, that no one coming with an unprejudiced mind to the ſtudy of theſe paſſages would think, in the reading, of ſuch deep things as modern divines have ſometimes affected to ſee in them, and deduce from them, ſupported, as they ſuppoſe, by St. Paul, of whoſe principles and modes of reaſoning from the Old Teſtament, as before obſerved, ſome further knowledge is deſirable, if it were attainable.

They who ſay, that the ancient Ebionites, a ſort of mongrel ſect, half Jew and half Chriſtian, rejected the Epiſtles of St. Paul, may, for aught that I know to the contrary, ſpeak the truth. But if they did this for the reaſon not uncommonly given, his ſpeaking ſo diſreſpectfully in them of the law of Moſes, they may ſeem to have been ſo far not quite fair and candid; this great Apoſtle, by his expoſitions of the Abrahamic covenant, having given back as it were to the firſt founder of their nation what he may ſeem to have taken away from its lawgiver. Neither heretics nor orthodox are always candid.

from

from what follows; *For my thoughts are not your thoughts; nether are your ways my ways, ſaith the* LORD. *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater: So ſhall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: It ſhall not return unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it. For ye ſhall go out,* that is, from Babylon, *with joy, and be led forth,* &c. Such is the concluſion; which ſhews, that the *word* before mentioned is the word or promiſe concerning the return; and further, that the Judaical, rather than evangelical turn (as ſome ſpeak) which has been above given to the whole chapter, is moſt probably the trueſt.—To this all that follows in the next chapter (chap. lvi.) to ver. 8th, being an addreſs and encouragement to proſelytes and certain others, is exceedingly conformable: After which ſucceeds, in the 9th verſe to the end, and through the whole of chap. lviith, ſuch ſort of reproofs of the Jewiſh prieſts and people for their wickedneſs, and as being in this way the moſt proper authors of their own calamities, as we have had much of before in ſome former chapters, and may be now perhaps tempted to think was not very neceſſary to be again brought forward: unleſs what follows in the 13th and ſubſequent verſes ſhall perchance induce us to

change our opinion; in which we meet with the moſt pleaſing aſſurances of mercy, and that the puniſhment or chaſtiſement, though meant to be ſevere, ſhould not, ſo ſoon as the people became penitent, be long continued. Still however this was not meant for, and ſhould not be any encouragement to the wilfully wicked; ſee verſe the laſt. Upon which there follows, in chap. lviiith, and as if ſuggeſted by this idea, ſuch an addreſs to the Jewiſh nation, or rather declamation againſt them on account of their hypocriſy and other vices, as, however edifying, need not, ſo apparently Jewiſh is its character and nature, be here further noticed. And in like manner may the former part of chap. lixth be conceived and ſpoken of, and that only; there being in the 16th and following verſes to the end ſuch a different and more chearful train of thought entered upon, as is evidently preparatory to the ſtill more ſplendid and poetical account of the ſafety and felicity of the redeemed church and nation, which is the ſubject of the next chapter, chap. lxth, and is in part proved to be ſo, by this very ſuitable preparation for it. *Ariſe, ſhine: for thy light*, or deliverance, *is come*, (may not this be a reference to verſes 9th and 10th of the former chapter?) *and the glory of the* LORD *is riſen upon thee. For behold, the darkneſs ſhall cover the earth, and groſs darkneſs the people: but the* LORD *ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee. And the Gentiles ſhall come to thy light*, &c. All that follows to the end is of the like ſort: repreſenting in ſuch lively imagery the future felicity of the church and nation, the coming

over

over of proſelytes, and acceſſions of favour and ſupport from the neighbouring people; as may ſeem to ſome to be almoſt inadmiſſible: but not to thoſe, I apprehend, who ſhall duly conſider that Iſaiah is full as much a poet as a prophet; what has been above obſerved of the peculiar nature and ſtyle of his prophecies; (ſee before, upon chap. xxxii.) and that, of ſuch poetical and triumphant prophecy, and where many of the images are ſo very indeterminate, a cool, tame, and very literal fulfilment may be ſcarcely expected. Of this the two next chapters, in which are ſome paſſages more explanatory, and much leſs triumphant; (ſee chap. lxi. 4, 5, 6; and chap. lxii. 4, 8---12) are very confirming* ——In the next chapter (chap. lxiii.) a ſomewhat new view of the ſame general ſubject ſeems to come before us.

* Says St. Luke in his Goſpel, chap. iv. 16th, &c. *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as his cuſtom was, he went into the ſynagogue, on the ſabbath day, and ſtood up for to read. And there was delivered to him the book of the prophet Eſaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,* to wit, in chap. lxi. 1ſt, &c; *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the Goſpel to the poor; he hath ſent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he cloſed the book, and gave it again to the miniſter, and ſat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the ſynagogue were faſtened on him. And he began to ſay unto them. This day is this ſcripture fulfilled in your ears.* It certainly was ſo, in the then Jewiſh ſenſe of fulfilling, and even in a higher ſenſe than that in which the words were at firſt ſpoken; by how much the character and miſſion of Jeſus were greater than Iſaiah's, and his redemption ſuperior to any other whatſoever.

By

By a very bold poetical fiction the Supreme Being is repreſented, in the character of a warrior, as taking vengeance of his own and his people's enemies, and as having already, in this way, begun with Edom, in his return from which the firſt verſe very beautifully repreſents him: ſee before, upon chap. xxxivth; and compare chap. lxi. 2, with verſe 4th of this, in further illuſtration. The fiction is of the dramatic kind, and ends at laſt in ſuch acknowledgments of paſt guilt, and ſentiments of penitence, prayer, and thankſgiving, on the church's part, as may be ſeen in verſe 7th and following. Of the next chapter, which is a continuation of the ſame prayers, confeſſions, and acknowledgments on the church's part, the ſame judgment may be given. After which, in chap. lxv. the Supreme Being is repreſented as replying in the manner following. *I am ſought*, or rather, known, *of them that aſked not for me; I am found of them that ſought me not: I ſaid, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* To refer this, as ſome chooſe to do, to the vocation of the Gentiles, in the ſenſe in which modern divines uſually explain it, appears to me to be very uncritical: it is impoſſible, I conceive, that ſo great a ſubject ſhould have been ſo ſlightly and only incidentally mentioned, and then ſo ſuddenly diſmiſſed, as it here moſt evidently is: how much more reaſonable to explain it of ſuch inſtances of proſelytiſm and converſion as have been before referred to in chapters lv. lvi. and ſome other paſſages? and to be intended as a ſevere kind of reflection upon the

Jews,

Jews, as having been leſs intelligent and dutiful than had been the caſe in ſome inſtances with thoſe not originally his own people? To this all that follows in the chapter is conformable; being in the former part ſuch an accuſation of the Jews on account of their hypocriſy, impiety, and conformity to the ſuperſtitions of the heathens, (of the Egyptians, probably, more eſpecially) and imputation of their calamities to themſelves in this way, as we have often had before us; and, in the latter part, a ſomewhat like figurative and poetical repreſentation, with thoſe in ſome former chapters, of the ſafety and felicity of their new ſtate and condition. The very juſt views of God and religion, and of the worthleſsneſs of all external rites and ceremonies in compariſon with good morals, with which the next and laſt chapter opens, are very conformable to ſuch others as are elſewhere to be met with in the Old Teſtament; and of ſuch a ſort as the Jewiſh church and nation ſeem to have much needed. After which there follows to the end what may ſeem to ſome a ſort of general cloſe of the whole, and recapitulation; ver. 5th, &c. *Hear the word of the* LORD, *ye that tremble at his word*, or ye religious Jews, by way of diſtinction from thoſe others of an irreligious, ſcoffing, and atheiſtical ſort, who have been ſo often mentioned or referred to, in chap. viith and viiith; xxviii. 14; l. 10, 11. lv. 3, 4, and in other places: *Your brethren that hated you, and caſt you out*, as it were, *for my name's ſake*, and literally would, if they could, have done ſo, *ſaid*, in their taunting and ſcoffing way, *Let the* LORD *be glorified*, or now glorify

glorify himſelf, in and by Iſrael; whom he hath ſo often ſpoken of as being his glory, and in whom he would be glorified; ſee chap. v. 18, 19. xliii. 7. xlvi. 13. xlix. 3. *But he will appear to your joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed.* In token of which, *A voice of noiſe from the city, a voice of noiſe from the temple;* to denote the reſtoration and repoſſeſſion of them: *a voice of the* LORD *that rendereth recompence to his enemies,* as the ſame loud ſhouts may be conſidered as expreſſing. Then follow ſuch promiſes of future population and increaſe, delivered in poetic language, as we have had before in chap. xlix. 17---21. lii. 1, 2, 3, and in other places. Ver. 14. *And when ye ſee this, your heart ſhall rejoice, and your bones ſhall flouriſh like an herb: and the hand of the* LORD *ſhall be made known towards his ſervants, and his indignation towards his enemies. For behold, the* LORD *will come with fire, and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger and fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire;* probably referring to the continuance and conſummation of that wrath which in chap. lxiii. 1ſt, is repreſented as beginning. *For by fire and by his ſword will the* LORD *plead with all fleſh,* that is, the cauſe of his people; *and the ſlain of the* LORD *ſhall be many. They that ſanctify themſelves, and purify themſelves in the gardens,* &c. (we have had theſe words before in chap. lxv. 3, 4; and ſee alſo chap. i. 29: from whence the concluſion would ſeem to be, that here the idolatrous and heathenizing Jews, as in the verſe before their idolatrous heathen enemies, are intended) *ſhall be conſumed together,* that

that is, both the one and the other, *ſaith the* LORD. *For I know their works and their thoughts: it ſhall come to paſs that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they ſhall come and ſee my glory;* my glorious power and faithfulneſs, in the fulfilment of my promiſes, and in the deſtruction of theſe idolaters. *And I will ſet a ſign among them,* or give ſufficient tokens there of my power and anger, *and I will ſend thoſe that eſcape of them,* ſuch as may be able to make their eſcape from the deſtruction threatened, *unto the nations, to Tarſhiſh, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the iſles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have ſeen my glory, and they ſhall declare,* theſe eſcaped or run away perſons ſhall, *my glory,* the proofs of my glorious power which they have ſeen, or been inſtances of, *among the Gentiles. And they ſhall bring,* be the means of bringing, *your brethren,* meaning ſuch of them as had not, perhaps, come back in the firſt inſtance, and with the general body, but might be yet, through various cauſes, remaining abroad, (unleſs, perchance, there may be in theſe words a poetic wiſh and glance at leaſt, of the compaſſionable kind, to the ten tribes more anciently carried away, as ſeems to me by what follows to be the caſe) *an offering to the* LORD *out of all nations, upon horſes, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon ſwift beaſts, to my holy mountain Jeruſalem,* ſaith the*

* Let this be compared with the ſame phraſeology in chap. ii. 2, and the interpretation of the latter, as given in a former note, may, perhaps, be eſtabliſhed. See before, the note upon Chap. lv. 4.

LORD,

LORD, *as the children of Iſrael bring an offering in a clean veſſel into the houſe of the* LORD. *And I will take of them for Prieſts and Levites, ſaith the* LORD. Such are the ideas which ſuggeſt themſelves to me in the reading: ideas, I conceive, which have never been yet very viſibly and diſtinctly realized; and with reſpect to which, it may be beſt perhaps in me, to leave it to my future good commentator to conſider, how far the Jews, now exiſting, may be right in hereafter expecting ſome literal fulfilment of them, or whether the whole, as we are now drawing to a cloſe, may not be beſt conceived of as the effect rather of an elevated, affectionate, and poetic imagination only. So I certainly think the next and very laſt paſſage may be very reaſonably conceived of. *For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make,* (theſe we have had before, and their explication, in chap. lxv. 17, 18,) *ſhall remain before me, ſaith the* LORD, *ſo ſhall your ſeed and your name remain. And it ſhall come to paſs, that from one new moon to another, and from one ſabbath to another, ſhall all fleſh come to worſhip before me, ſaith the* LORD. *And they ſhall go forth, and look upon the carcaſſes of the men that have tranſgreſſed againſt me. For their worm ſhall not die, neither ſhall their fire be quenched, and they ſhall be an abhorring to all fleſh.* If this only means, that the puniſhments which God would inflict upon the enemies of his church and people, ſhould not loſe their effect, but be long ſeen and had in remembrance, it is ſuch a meaning as is equally agreeable

ble both to Scripture and reaſon; and more, I preſume, is not admiſſible; for who ever heard of a worm that never dies; and of fire that does not go out, &c.? Theſe things are not in nature; and we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the Supreme Being ever did or will work ſuch miracles?*——But of whom, and of what time, it may perhaps be aſked, does the poet or prophet ſpeak theſe things? Anſwer; according to Grotius, we are to explain the laſt three chapters of the wars and victories of Judas Maccabæus, whom he ſuppoſes to be the perſon in chap. lxiii. 1ſt, *coming from Edom, with*

* Says our Saviour in St. Mark, chap. ix. 43, &c. *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* Whence ſome, who can make pretty free with Scripture language when it chances not to be with them, have been wont to infer, not the eternity, but the non-eternity of hell torments; ſagaciouſly obſerving, that the fire or worm which ceaſe not, muſt in time deſtroy the ſubject of them. Though not much diſpoſed to admit the doctrine of eternity of puniſhment, meaning torment, I do not ſee this to be a good argument. For if the ſame miracle, which continued the fire and the worm, did not alſo, in the caſe, which the prophecy ſuppoſes, continue the bodies, how could they be, as is here ſuppoſed in ver. 24th, things to be ſeen, and an abhorring of all fleſh? And then again, how awful, in the ſame view, and ſtrong are theſe other words of this context, *For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire*; to imply, as it ſhould ſeem, that the fire of hell would be rather of a preſerving than conſuming quality, *as* anciently *every ſacrifice was ſalted with ſalt*, had this emblematical token of continuance. Obſerve, what is truly the ſenſe of Scripture, and whether that be itſelf true, are different inquiries, and that it is the firſt alone which I meddle with.

dyed garments from Bozrah: While the two Lowths, and with them probably the more general ſtream of commentators, rather chooſe to ſuppoſe, that not only in theſe, but ſome of the preceding chapters, we are got wholly away, as it were, from the affairs of the Jewiſh church, and into thoſe of the Chriſtian; and even into matters which will only come to paſs in the laſt days of the world, as they explain ſome of the paſſages. Concerning which notions I can only ſay, that as I have not yet ſeen any ſatisfactory and convincing evidence of them, ſo I ſhall not, I hope, have any criminal and wilful objection to it, if ever aught of this kind ſhall hereafter ſeem to diſcloſe itſelf; and, until which time, it is humbly hoped, that the remarks of a different ſort, which have been propoſed above, will not be denied a patient hearing. Making no pretenſions to praiſe, they will not, it is hoped, incur cenſure.

APPENDIX.

The following Obſervations on the Subject of Baptiſm were drawn up, many Years ſince, in Conſequence of a Converſation with a Friend whoſe Mind had been diſturbed, I believe in the firſt Inſtance, by the reading of Mr. Emlyn's Previous Queſtion.—*They are only here ſubjoined, if perchance they may be of any Service to others labouring under the ſame or like Difficulties, and with none other View. It ſeemed a good Argument at the Time, and I cannot now be willing to reconſider it.*

REVEREND SIR,

YOU have been pleaſed to aſk me what I think upon the ſubject of infant baptiſm, and to inquire more particularly, how I can ſatisfy myſelf in the conſtant adminiſtration of that religious rite, if indeed it may be called one, (ſo you were pleaſed to expreſs yourſelf,) when I was ſo free to acknowledge the little evidence which ſeems to be producible for it from the Scriptures. I ſhall be glad, ſir, if any thing which I can ſuggeſt may be of uſe to you in your inquiries into this or any other ſubject. This indeed it might very ill become me to ſuppoſe, did not your own requeſt render any apology needleſs. I ſhall therefore ſtate the argument briefly, as it has for ſome time paſt appeared to my own mind, and ſo leave it with you for uſe or cenſure.

It has always been a principle with me in the conſideration of this ſubject, that baptiſm was a rite of the Jewiſh church before it was received into the Chriſtian; and was from thence taken and adopted

into the latter, in the days of the Baptiſt and of Jeſus. If you aſk me what proof I have of this, I anſwer, none, perhaps, ſufficient to overcome the cavils of a pertinacious and willing objector; and yet ſuch, notwithſtanding, as has given to my own mind a very conſiderable degree of ſatisfaction. For, firſt, it is now acknowledged, I think, by perſons of almoſt all parties, that the modern Jews, at leaſt, baptize or waſh with water, their proſelytes; in caſe ſuch be made to their religion; and alſo that the propriety and even neceſſity of ſuch baptiſm are mentioned by their celebrated Rabbi Maimonides, and ſome earlier Jewiſh writers *: and I certainly think,

* The following are only ſome of theſe ancient Jewiſh authorities, as I find them in pages 266, 610, of Lightfoot's Opera Latina.

" Non eſt quis proſelytus, uſque dum circumcidatur et bapti-
" zetur."—*Without circumciſion and baptiſm no one can be a proſelyte.*

" Si cum proſelyto proſelyti facti etiam ſunt filii ſui filiæque, iis cedit in bonum quod a patre eorum factum eſt.—Hoc intelligendum de parvulis, qui proſelyti facti ſunt ſimul cum patre eorum." —*When with any proſelyte his ſons and daughters are proſelyted with him, the action is equally valid for both.—I now ſpeak of little ones who are proſelyted with their parents.*

" Ethnicus qui fit proſelytus, et ſervus qui eſt manumiſſus, ecce ille eſt ſicut parvulus jam natus. Atque omnes cognati, quos habuit, cum eſſet Ethnicus, aut ſervus, non jam ſunt ejus cognati."—*The Heathen when proſelyted, and the ſlave when manumitted, may be ſaid to be each born again. Their former kindred are no longer conſidered as being ſuch to them.*

—" Immergit ſe, et aſcendit; et ecce, fit ille ſicut Iſraelita quoad omnia."—*He immerges into water and comes up again, and becomes, inſtantly, an Iſraelite complete.*

" Quan-

think, that in all caſes in which we and the Jews hold any thing in common, we, and not they, muſt have been the borrowers. For when was it ever known that they could be willing to receive, and have, in fact, taken from us any thing, which was in the firſt inſtance, and excluſively ours? and would not rather, for this reaſon, have held it in abhorrence? Secondly, the genius at large of the Jewiſh diſpenſation, in which there were ſo many and divers waſhings, and under which in particular every heathen or gentile is ſuppoſed to be unclean, (an idea which often occurs in the reading of the Old Teſtament, and ſeems to be at times retained in the New *,) has great weight with me in this argument; and the more ſo, when I obſerve, in the reading of the New Teſtament, how often Chriſtian baptiſm is referred to, or ſpoken of, under the notion of a cleanſing or waſhing, and is even ſuppoſed to have been the æra of a new birth or regeneration; as in John iii. 3, 5, and Titus iii.

" Quandocunque quis Ethnicus ad fœdus Iſraeliticum ſe vult recipere ac ſociari, et ſub alis divinæ majeſtatis ſe reponere, jugumque legis in ſe recipere, circumciſio, baptiſmus, atque oblatio voluntaria requiruntur."—*Of the Heathen who wiſhes to join himſelf to the nation and covenant of Iſrael, to be under ſuch peculiar divine protection, and with this to take upon him the yoke of the law, three things are required, circumciſion, baptiſm, and a free-will offering.*

The Moſaic law having appointed no particular formulary for caſes of this kind, which muſt however have ſometimes occurred, the three things laſt mentioned were very like to be by the perſons in authority inſiſted on, and baptiſm, I conceive, with as much propriety as either of the other.

* See Acts xth and xith chapters. Alſo chap. xv. 7, 8, 9. Add alſo 1 Cor. vii, 14. 1 Peter, ii, 9. Mark vii. 1—4, &c.

5th; an idea which could not have been taken from the Talmudiſts, and which ſeems to be only rationally referrible to ſome ſuch ancient baptiſm as I am now ſuppoſing. Thirdly, in the diſcourſe of John with the Phariſees in St. John, chap. i. and in what we read of his proceeding with them and the people at large in Matt. iii. I am miſtaken if we have not ſome appearance of ſomething like a poſitive ſcripture proof or implication upon this ſubject: as in each of theſe places the propriety of baptiſm, as an ordinance of initiation, ſeems to be admitted, and is ſpoken of by all the parties with the moſt extreme degree of eaſe and familiarity; and the only matter in queſtion ſeems to have been this only, why John ſhould aſſume to himſelf the adminiſtration of this rite, in whoſe pretenſions and character there was ſo little that was new to juſtify it. See in this view in particular, Matt. iii. 5, 6, 7. John i. 25 *; and perhaps alſo chap. iii. 10.

But if ſo much may be reaſonably ſuppoſed concerning the original of baptiſm in the Chriſtian church, then for certain, in all our ſubſequent inquiries into the more particular objects and modes of it, &c. we ought at leaſt to have this more ancient Jewiſh baptiſm in view, and pay a reaſonable attention to it, whatever elſe we may chooſe to take along with it into conſideration. And thus proceed-

* "——The Sanhedrim by their meſſengers," ſays Lightfoot, "inquired not of John concerning the reaſon of baptiſm, "but concerning the authority of the baptizer; not what "baptiſm meant, but whence he had a licenſe." Exercitations upon Matt. iii. ver. 6th.

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ing, I do not ſee how the particulars following can be reaſonably queſtioned;—Firſt, that baptiſm among the Jews, being, by the acknowledgment of all who admit the fact, an ordinance of initiation only, and not to be repeated, as we have reaſon to believe, upon the perſons once receiving it; (ſince nothing can properly have two beginnings) nor yet again in the perſons of their deſcendants, (ſince, according to a well known rule, *partus ſequitur ventrem*, the children of ſuch parents would be ſo far born clean or holy; as St. Paul ſeems to acknowledge, and to have applied the principle to this very caſe, in 1 Cor. vii. 14th, and by implication again in Rom. xi. 16th) that therefore Chriſtian baptiſm was probably ſo meant, and ſhould be only ſo conceived of.—Secondly, ſince it ſeems to be agreed, and the reaſon of the caſe would ſeem to have required, that when heathens came over to Judaiſm, and were waſhed or baptized, their children, and all the other parts of the family, being equally unclean, ſhould be waſhed or baptized with them; [which, to ſpeak in the words of a celebrated author, was a part of their own new profeſſion of religion*;] ſo alſo, that in

* "I cannot think," ſays Dr. Prieſtley, in Hiſtory of Corruptions, vol. II. "that writers have attended ſo much as they "ought to have done to the power of the maſter of a family "(the *patria* poteſtas) in the eaſt, and particularly have not "conſidered how far his own character and profeſſion uſually "affected his wife, his children, and his ſervants, and indeed "every thing that belonged to him.—For my own part,—I "conſider the baptizing of my children, not as directly im-"plying that they have any intereſt in it, or in the things "ſignified

in the baptiſms of any early jewiſh or heathen heads of families into Chriſt, the ſame rule muſt have been obſerved, and their children and ſervants alſo, in caſe ſuch they had, would have been baptized with them. A conſideration which ſeems to render needleſs any very ſolicitous inquiry into the actual ſtate of ſuch houſeholds, in this reſpect, as we read of in Acts xvi. 15, 35, and in ſome other places.—And therefore, thirdly, that in this laſt commiſſion of Jeſus to his Apoſtles, *Go ye therefore into all nations, and make diſciples, baptizing them,* nothing more was probably meant by him, or would be underſtood by them, than their ſo receiving into his church, that is, by this ordinance of baptiſm, the firſt Chriſtian converts or proſelytes, with their houſeholds; and a like obligation upon their ſucceſſors in the Chriſtian miniſtry to do the ſame, when the like opportunities and occaſions ſhould ariſe of doing it.

"But if this be right," you will, I ſuppoſe, ſay, "how does it appear, that ſuch others as may be ſuppoſed to have been baptized in the loins of their firſt Chriſtian anceſtors, or to ſpeak in the more uſual phraſeology, that the children of believers, are to be baptized?" To which my reply, in the firſt place, ſhall be this, that perhaps it is not right, but miſtaken and erroneous; and that if this may poſſibly be the caſe, and you ſhould be of this opinion, there will be then at

"ſignified by it, but as a part of my own profeſſion of chriſ-"tianity." This obſervation, applied only to firſt converts, ſeems both fine and forcible. Is it equally ſo any further?

leaſt, and ſo far as you are concerned, no difficulty. But as I am now rather to ſuppoſe the contrary, and your agreement with me in this argument, I go on therefore to obſerve ſecondly, that I am wont, upon the proper occaſions, ſuch a one as I take this to be, to diſtinguiſh between queſtions of mere ſpeculation, and in which the rational faculty is alone concerned, and ſuch others, like the preſent, which are of a practical kind, and in which others, beſides ourſelves, are to be conſidered; in which I conceive, that ſome degree of yielding to pious cuſtom and prejudice in others, and more eſpecially when nothing ſinful, but rather of uſeful tendency is required, is allowable. And in ſuch manner of thinking and of acting, I aſk whether I am not juſtified, in the third place, and more eſpecially in this very caſe, by the principles and conduct both of Jeſus and of John in the paſſage following, Matt. iii. 13th, &c? *Then cometh Jeſus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, ſaying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me? And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, Suffer it to be ſo now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs*, to do what has a religious appearance, is of uſeful tendency, and will be well taken and thought of. *Then he ſuffered him.* Shall I now then mention, in the laſt place, the ſeveral inſtances in which the adminiſtration of the rite in queſtion ſeems to me to fall within the reaſon of this rule, and become a caſe of this nature? Upon ſuch occaſions religious families and friends are brought together: the value of a child, and its im-

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portance in a religious view, are recognized, and will, it is hoped, be repreſented: the goodneſs and grace of God to it under the circumſtances of ſuch a birth and early Chriſtian call, and not in the way of natural life and common providence only, are ſeen and acknowledged: the parents have a new opportunity given them of profeſſing their faith in Chriſt, and of being very ſeaſonably put in mind of their duty, as Chriſtians, both perſonal and relative: and upon the minds of all who are preſent one would willingly hope that ſome good impreſſions, in the way of brotherly love, and of Chriſtian friendſhip and uſefulneſs, as well as of chearfulneſs, would be made and remain.—Whereas in the caſe of adult baptiſm (obſerve, I mean only of Chriſtian adults) all theſe agreeable and good effects ſeem to me at leaſt to be, at a very ſeaſonable and proper time, wanting; and a very conſiderable indecorum to be afterwards, in the caſes of ſuch perſons, practiſed; the indecorum, I mean, of now treating as Chriſtians, for the firſt time, perſons who may have probably been ſo, and very ſerious and good Chriſtians too, for many years before; and in whoſe caſes, if perchance quite ſo much cannot be ſaid of them, yet ſtill, the goodneſs of God to them, in the circumſtances of their Chriſtian birth and call, ſhould before this have been acknowledged, &c.

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THE END.

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